EXPLORING AND EXPOSING MALAYSIA'S CLASS PROBLEM

PEOPLE'S REAL ENEMY

FEUDALISM IN Malaysia TODAY

THE REAL ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM IS THE ELITE

MURRAY HUNTER

An Ovi eBooks Publication
© 2024 Ovi eBookPublications - All material is copyright of the Ovi eBooks Publications & the writer

Ovi eBooks are available in Ovi/Ovi eBookshelves pages and they are for free.
If somebody tries to sell you an Ovi book please contact us immediately.

For details, contact: ovimagazine@yahoo.com

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in or introduced
into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form, or by any means
(electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise),
without the prior permission of the writer or the above publisher of this book

Murray Hunter

Feudalism in Malaysia today

An Ovi eBooks Publication
© 2024 Ovi eBookPublications - All material is copyright of the Ovi eBooks Publications & the writer

Contents

Introduction:
The real elephant in the room is the elite Pg 7

The curse of feudalism Pg 13

Cabals, Feudalism, and Apartheid:
Will these institutions damn Malaysia's
future prosperity? Pg 35

Malays are second-class citizens
in their own country Pg 55

The Dark Forces Changing
Malaysian Society Pg 65

Malaysia: Permanent Ethnic Malay Polity Pg 87

How the Malay elite hijacked Malaysia Pg 97

The Malay elite is just a cozy little club Pg 109

How Ketuanan Melayu became
an ideology of greed Pg 117

Anwar's Ketuanan Melayu Pg 129

Malaysia's political theatre:
it's all about power Pg 134

Malaysia Has Fallen:
Recent Najib Commutation Highlights
Two-Tier System Of Justice Pg 144

An OviBooks Publication
© 2024 OviBooks Publications. All material is copyright of OviBooks Publications.

Introduction:
The real elephant in the room is the elite

Commentary and literature on Malaysia will tell you that the country's problems are related to race. There was May 13, 1969, which is portrayed as a watershed in Malaysia's history and the catalyst of the affirmative action policies towards Bumiputeras.

Then, Article 153 of Malaysia's Constitution grants the Yang di-PertuanAgong (King of Malaysia) responsibility for 'safeguard[ing] the special position of the Malays and natives of any of the states of Sabah and Sarawak. This partly enhanced the 'KetuananMelayu' or Malay supremacy narratives advocated by some groups, where politicians from the Malay quarter of politics have demonized other races for the 'so called ills' of 'Malay backwardness'.

However, these narratives don't match up with the realities. Malaysian society still has many of the traits of the old feudalism. Malaysia's title system reinforces a feudal hierarchy. Agencies and ministries have special VVIP service rooms, such as are found in immigration offices. VVIP car parks and number plates espouse to the public that there is a multi-tiered citizenryhierarchy.

Race has been long used as a placard to divide society. The Malays have been continually described as needing support to rise above their handicaps. Thus, special privileges ranging from quotas in education and the civil service, to institutionalized discounts on property are espoused as necessary to help the Malays.

Over the years, these policies have created a sense of entitlement within Malays, where many expect the government to provide for them. The 'myth of the lazy Malay' conjured up by Mahathir Mohamed in his book 'The Malay Dilemma', to some extent became a self-fulfilling prophecy by the introduction of the New Economic Policy (NEP).

By 'feeding the Malays cake', the real divisions of society could be hidden for many years. Many Malays were very grateful for what they were given, and

UMNO told them to show their gratitude by voting for them each election. This kept UMNO in power for more than 50 years. This also allowed a class of elites to accumulate great wealth, far beyond the imagination of the ordinary person.

This wealth accumulated by a class of elite was well hidden from the public, especially before the advent of the internet. Anti-corruption mechanisms were almost non-existent until the formation of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC), which itself is not independent. The MACC is controlled by the executive, which told MACC management what to pursue and what to ignore. The top echelons of the civil service looked after their own, bushing corruption under the carpet to avoid scandal. The media has been hindered by intimidation and harsh defamation laws to stifle the very concept of investigative journalism. With self-censorship, most newspapers and news portals have become nothing much more than mouthpieces for the government.

The ruling elite became untouchable, often citing the slogan "We are the law" in Malaysia. Criticizing royalty is basically taboo. Politicians and their cronies until now, have escaped legal scrutiny, due to a non-independent attorney general and public pros-

ecutor. Defamation laws prevent local investigative journalists and activists exposing corruption. Whistleblowers are persecuted.

Budgets and five-year plans unashamedly provided projects for the elite, who have been nurtured by Mahathir and Anwar Ibrahim's development of crony capitalism in Malaysia during the 80s and 90s. Prize assets and monopolies were handed to these elite and even bailed out, if necessary.

For fifty years the elite have run amok all over the Malaysian economy with 'who you know capitalism'. The elite have taken the choice rent-seeking opportunities in the nation. Today, Malaysian politics and business is filled with a group of families, who dominate both political power and business.

Malaysia's political instability over the last 5 years doesn't have racial origins. It is caused solely by a fragmented elite now fighting over power. The investigations and prosecutions going on now are the result of a deep rift within the elite. When this rift is patched up, business will most likely just go back to usual.

All the governments have been led by the same old politicians, who are members of, or aligned with the elites.

This situation is so blatant, new blood is being kept out or sidelined from government to the point, Malaysia doesn't have the talent waiting in the wings to takeover power in the future. Economically, there are very few wealth creation segments within the economy. The elite have geared the economy towards rent-seeking activities they or their nominees' control. Anyone who exposes them is sent into bankruptcy through legal proceedings.

The elephant in the room is the elites, not racial division. Anyone who thinks otherwise has been fooled by the cover up over so many years.

Its ironical that the elites themselves are the ones exposing that class is Malaysia's real problem. Mahathir's pursuit of prosecuting former prime minister Najib Razak after GE14, exposed the riches he had. Now Anwar's use of the MACC to investigate and prosecute the old cronies of the elite is exposing the charade. The people are supportive of their prosecutions and jailing. How long will it be before the people realize, who the real enemies have been over the last fifty years?

The curse of feudalism

How feudalism hinders community transformation and economic evolution: Isn't equal opportunity a basic human right?

The Olympic Opening Ceremony last Friday night was a spectacular extraordinaire under the direction of Danny Boyle of *"Slumdog Millionaire"* fame. One of the highlights of the ceremony was a showcase of British cultural and economic evolution. Conspicuous during this part of the ceremony was the cast of white, black, Asian and other ethnic groups performing as a unified whole, showing the good, bad, and ugly of British history. Britain, one of the bastions of feudalism in the past has appeared to have come to terms with her infamy, banishing the disease to the annuls of history.

On a national speaking tour of Malaysia, the renowned Oxford Islamic scholar Prof Tariq Ramadan visited the town where the author is domiciled. Prof Ramadan wrote a blog after his trip describing a mosque built on the shore with some wind and solar power generation[1]. He saw the mosque as symbolic of Malaysia's rejection of US values, and the maturing of Islamic humanism. I guess perception and meaning is in the eye of the beholder, or alternatively Tariq Ramadan had visited the town in some parallel universe. The mosque is located in one of the poorest states of Malaysia where any public discussion of Islam requires a licence from the authorities. Given that there is little shortage of places of worship one could easily think that the funds used to build the mosque may have better served the cause of Islamic humanism by assisting in elevating poverty. Grand infrastructure and the grand projects to build the icons are symbolic not of Islamic humanism, but rather the gulf between the empowered and powerless in the country.

These two events caused me to reflect on a disease that still festers in many parts of the world – the curse of feudalism. Feudalism is an affliction upon humankind, akin to apartheid and slavery. The nature of feudalism inhibits people, communities, and

nations from making the necessary transformation within economy and society that will ensure escape from the shackles of poverty, to survival with dignity outside the envelop of ignorance that prevents emergence into an aspired place within the world community. What is even more amazing is that authors like Messrs Beinhocker, Diamond, Friedman, Ohmae, Porter, and Sachs, have had little, if not anything to say on this matter. Feudalism has been treated like leprosy; its existence deigned.

Traditionally feudalism referred to the order of society in medieval Europe between the 9th and 16th centuries. Feudalism could be described as society governed by those eligible through birthright, relationships with the favoured and landed gentry. Feudalism can be seen as a grant of land, the sharing of power and privilege in return for favour and loyalty, and a structuring of society with well defined layers where each layer forms a sub-culture with different sets of values, beliefs, assumptions, and aspirations. Economic organization will also follow this hierarchical order where wealth will be concentrated within the upper echelons of society. There are normally very few vertical movements of people up and down the hierarchy. The basis of power is through land, capital, military, or political control, and these ar-

rangements are hereditary and within selected families from generation to generation.

Through analogy, the concept of feudalism extended to Shogunate Japan, parts of Africa, the kingdoms of the Middle East, South Asia, Latin America, South America, and to the *"Malay"* Archipelago *(Nusantara)*. Although there was a movement to sponge the term in the 1970s'[2]; unlike the eradication of polio, the causes and symptoms of feudalism didn't disappear. Feudalism in various forms still exists in one form or another, and its best *to call a spade, a spade.*

The conceptual nature of feudalism can be seen to exist within three layers.

The first layer consists of the institutions and associated mechanisms of the *"rule of law"*. Due to wide variations across the world, feudalism across this layer is difficult to precisely describe. However it isn't so important whether the power base of institutions is based on divinity, theocracy, royal peerage, military authority, or civilian rule, some, if not many characteristics are very similar. One of the most important characteristics is that entry and membership of institutions is based on some form of privilege. Position, authority, and promotion usually involve some form of nepotism. Very strong power-distance

relationships help to maintain an unquestioned authority within these institutions. Dealings with outside parties and stakeholders are usually undertaken through chosen and selected parties that are formally or informally linked to the leadership of the institution. Many of these institutions utilize the dogma they develop as means that cannot be questioned without some form of fear by the general population with covert or overt threats of punishment by the authorities.

Under such a regime the rule of law is used as an instrument of control, utilized for the interests of the power-elite. Institutions strive for absolute power over a range of strategic assets important to the economy of the country, even though the constitution may specify otherwise. This is achieved through various informal methods such as extra-legal and extra-judicial action over a long period of time that intimidates the general population[3].

The second layer of feudalism is the way people in society are structured. In many societies this can be very overt where even *'titled peerages'* specify class. In one modern developing country government departments serving the public even have special rooms to serve *'VVIPs"*. Other signs may be more

covert where level of education divides society into the *'educated'* that *'believe they know what's best'*, and the *'undereducated'*. This divide is the basis of deep seated political instability in some countries.

What is perhaps most important is that potential opportunities for people to enrich their lives through entrepreneurial and business opportunities is severely limited to groups outside the *'privileged'*. The most lucrative opportunities are the sole prerogative of small groups under various guises called *cronyism* or *nepotism*, etc. Due to the formal market restrictions by licensing and control over land many countries appear to be *'business friendly'* but are certainly not *'market friendly'*, where large businesses operate under protection as monopolies or oligopolies. This brings great inefficiency to the economy in a similar manner the *'import replacement tariffs'* of the 1960s in many developing economies at the time.

As a consequence major businesses in many South East Asian nations are in the hands of only a few dozen families. Wealth is concentrated and through their position and developed complacency, these groups tend to invest in relatively low risk rent seeking investments. Many businesses are based upon resource monopolies and large tracts of land are stripped in

pursuit of large profits under the thinly veiled name of development. This is not just restricted to the large firms of the nation. Farmers with connections to local authorities are able to go into state and national forests almost unchecked and carve out as much land as they can for their activities. In such societies resources are stripped for personal benefit at a cost to the environment. This is an extremely important factor contributing to global warming that has barely been mentioned in debate, let alone acted upon. Feudal societies are a major contributor to global warming.

The third layer of feudalism is the most damaging to society – mindset. In feudal like societies the elite work with the assumption that *'we are the law'* and operate accordingly, festering an ambience of narcissism through the upper echelons of society. Perceptions, ideas, and attitudes become fixed where society settles into a complacent patterning. In contrast, rural population live in an ambience of hopelessness and resignation of the assumption that *'this is how life is'*. The only groups that have much freedom of opportunity are the urban newcomers who are able to find employment or open a micro-enterprise within the major cities and towns.

Such is the evolved mindset of these types of societies; conservatism, risk adversity, ego-centrality, self interest, and lack of concern about the environment become the dominant traits of people and order of things. This mindset does not discriminate between public and private sector or rural and urban groups. Society creates a massive defence mechanism to deny the signs and forces of change, leading to a very fixed national narrative. This narrative can become so fixed and ego-centric that relations with neighbouring countries often become strained with the smallest of issues.

Complacency brings ineptness where institutions slowly decay as corruption and patrimonialism, the propensity to favour family and friends, rise. All institutional activities are focused upon the sole objective to support the existing power elite and protect them from domestic threats. Motivation is low and service levels in both government and the private sector is more akin to the old Eastern European countries under communist rule, rather than the vibrant growth economies around the world. Corruption becomes embedded within the culture where even the young and educated see it as the only means to advance in society, and more alarmingly – not wrong[4]. Society disintegrates into the lowest moral and ethical form

not unlike past societies that kept slaves, where in fact this still exists today in a contemporary form. Although altruism is often espoused, in reality, little if any exists within society.

In some cases feudalism became established in societies that easily accepted authority after colonial masters moved out. The new governments used feudalism as a means to both control and reap benefits for themselves. Urbanization and industrialization should normally bring enough impetuous to eradicate the forms of feudalism that exist within a nations as the basis of order and organization. Change brings pressure for transformation. Urban society begins to grow rapidly, triggered by the much higher wages offered for factory employment than can be obtained in any agricultural activities. Initially this migration is selective with the younger educated seeking urban employment but as demand for workers grows and stories about higher wages filter back to the rural areas, larger numbers of people migrate to the cities. Urban populations become consumers and increase demand for all types of food, accommodation, consumer and durable goods. They also partake in savings either voluntary or through nationally induced savings schemes developed by government through an emerging banking system. The education system

is enhanced from basic systems distilling discipline to those that place more emphasis on critical and creative thinking. Growing urban development attracts new entrepreneurs whose values shift from traditional attitudes to those more in line with an urban environment of a newly developing country (see figure 1.). Those with natural abilities are quick to emerge and the socio-economic structure of society begins changing away from its feudal base. They pick up new skills and competencies from education and employment and learn as they go along in their new businesses.

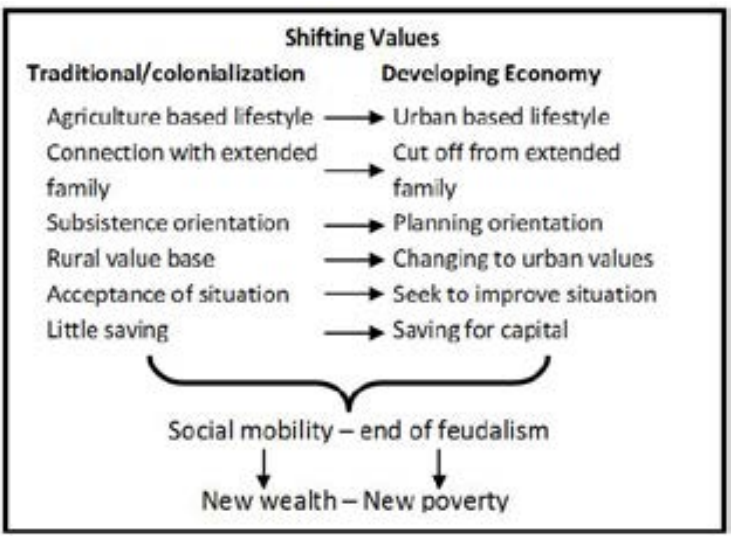


Figure 1. The shifting values that urban society brings to a developing economy.

However as a developing economy experiences rapidly changing demographics, this may leave a deeply divided agrarian society and newly educated urban society. This can still be seen today in most South-East Asian countries which have become part of the source of political problems in countries like Thailand[5]. Developing society has some influence on agrarian society through urban residents remitting funds back to parents and families in their villages and returning to build new houses and buy consumer goods. This starts to break down traditional values and bring envy into village societies.

Although economic growth is destroying traditional culture and values, a whole range of new opportunities begin to emerge with rural based urban centres developing. These new towns commercially serve their respective hinterlands with goods, basic education and health services provided by government. Newly developed infrastructure, roads, railways, communications, schools, and health centres help provide the ability of rural society to transform itself. This brings a whole new range of opportunities to those that can see the opportunity, have the resources, networks and skills to develop them. The economy is now developed into partitioned agricultural, manufacturing and service industries with

many new opportunities continually developing. The processes of rural-urban migration, population growth in urban centres, and increasing education, increased consumption and saving. Rising entrepreneurship occurred through increased opportunities, catalysing increased investment and rapid economic growth. These phenomena are shown in the schematic in figure 2.

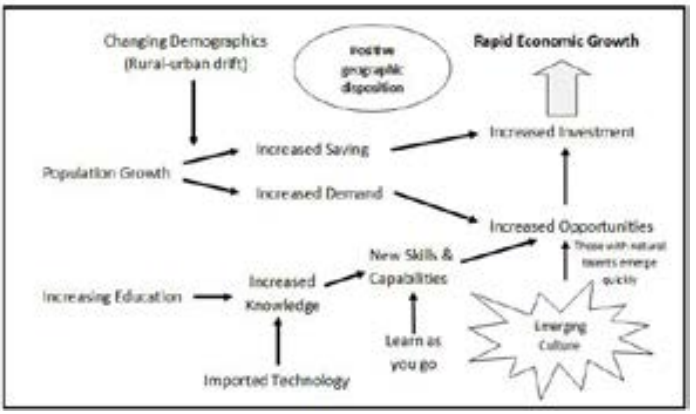


Figure 2. The path to rapid economic growth in a developing economy.

Rising populations create momentum, which create opportunities and begin to feed off each other creating a chain in the economy and expand as other opportunities become exploited. Real estate developments, need building contractors, which need

hardware suppliers, which need hardware goods manufacturers, who need workers who are paid and spend money on food, accommodation, and consumer goods. Sales operations are needed to sell the real estate and credit facilities are needed to enable people to buy the homes and properties. The development of a textile industry needs suppliers, tool manufacturers and dye manufacturers, and the development of the automobile industry needs parts manufacturers, paint manufacturers, steel suppliers, logistic transport providers, and automobile dealers. All these interactions creates and environment with a set of opportunities. This pattern of development, growth, and creation of opportunities, are in a perpetual motion. The inner city and suburban areas of cities develop certain socio-economic characteristics in terms of the sets of needs and wants consumers have leading to its own set of interrelationships which determines what can happen and what cannot happen.

There are pressures to adopt new more egalitarian business structures which sometimes challenge long existing orders. During the under-developed and early developing phases of economic development in many countries, businesses have been controlled by families of government officials and the military

protected by restrictive regulation and practices that allow monopolies and oligopoly competition. Such situations would be similar to those under the Suharto regime in Indonesia and the Marcos regime in the Philippines, but also exists throughout Africa, the Middle East and Latin America. In some of the old Soviet Block countries, state capitalism was replaced by a small group of politically supported entrepreneurs in what could be called *'oligarch capitalism'*. To a lesser in some countries like Malaysia certain parts of industries are controlled by Government Linked Companies (GLCs) under another version of state capitalism. The effect of these business structures is to restrict opportunity and growth to small groups of people.

One of the weapons the power elite use to prevent the above chain reaction of events is to delay or fail to build the necessary infrastructure to support this transformation. However changing demographics create trends that even the most powerful elite groups cannot hold back, often bringing great political instability. In these cases it may take some form of shock event like a political upheaval or even revolution to change the situation where a more egalitarian business society is created where more liberal business environments exist[6]. These reforms usually come under pressure by the people who have be-

come educated, having the confidence to recognize opportunities and had the opportunity to travel and see other countries where the business environment is much more open. Once this change in society occurs the economy can move onto the next stage of becoming a developed economy. Figure 3. shows the transformation from a feudal to a more egalitarian business society.

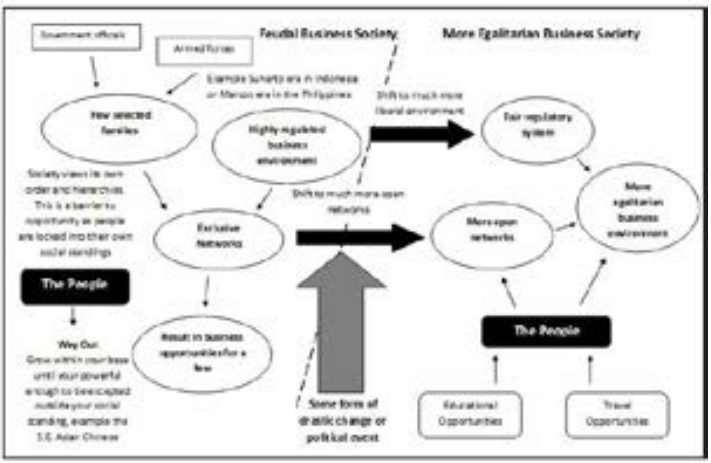


Figure 3. The shift from a feudal to an egalitarian business society.

So what are the consequences of feudalism? First of all feudalism creates rigidity based on hierarchy, power distance, custom, culture, and social expectations. This embeds static practices within a society

that leads to higher transaction costs and thus inefficiency[7]. Any comparative advantage a nation may have can be very quickly lost through this rigidity. These embedded informal rules, status rights, norms, and beliefs impede change, which is needed in an economy that is undergoing structural change and growth. This prevents a factor based economy moving onto becoming and innovation based economy. Patrimonial practices slowly lead to economic decline, at least relative to other nations which may lead to political instability and challenge of the *status quo*. This economic decay is in contrast to other countries that are trying to strengthen the rule of law and transparency.

Many third world governments venturing into state owned enterprises to assist in economic development are only transferring the *'old values and practices'* into these new organizations which are doomed to inefficiency from the start. State owned enterprises instead of opening up and developing the economy further take away entrepreneurial opportunities from private citizens and thus instead of enhancing growth, just redistribute existing wealth to privileged groups[8]. Business in the hands of such a few within the *'privileged class'* leads to other afflictions like groupthink that lead to consideration of few alterna-

tives and poor decision making[9]. Other practices like closed tenders just enhance un- competitiveness and raise transaction costs.

Today's international markets require innovation, particularly in developing supply and value chains. Rigid management and rent seeking industry structures based on a static outlook of society, particularly where government policy has supported this *status quo* greatly hinders the ability to be creative and compete internationally. In the world today there are many resource rich countries that survive on resource based exports which is hiding the underlying long term problems of the country's lack of comparative advantage. This prevents transformation, prevents the creation of comparative advantage in anything, except for resource based monopolies and rent seeking activities. Even if drastic political change occurs, the accumulated wealth, networks, and capital, along with the inefficient institutions left behind maintain a form of *neo-feudalism* that cannot be easily broken up. The inertia and vested interests of what has gone on for many years prevents dynamic change. As a consequence much of a country's population is deprived of the right to pursue basic opportunities where they are limited to a micro and SME nature.

Richard Florida postulates that technology, tolerance, and talent are prerequisites to creativity and innovation, the basis that enables the transformation of an economy[10]. Feudalistic societies tend to be poorly endowed with technology and more importantly are unable to learn to be innovative from the infusion of new technologies. New technologies are most often applied blindly without adaptation to specific conditions within the receiving country. As many feudal societies are based on some form of dogma, tolerance for alternative views is not usually acceptable and thus original thinking and creativity is greatly hindered. To this we must add market openness to enable the other factors to flourish. Otherwise an exodus of talent from the country or *'brain-drain'* may occur when there are any missing elements described above.

Any country that seeks to find its place of *prosperous contentment* within the world must transform from a *feudalscape* to an *innoscape.* The capital accumulation cycle must be made to work in a way that creates real value. This economic model must comprise of equitable market regulation, strong corporate governance, sound philosophies of risk allocation, undertake banking reform, enable fair, equitable, and responsible market regulation, create

prudent fiscal and monetary policy, and most importantly of all eliminate the ability of the people to use speculation as a source of wealth.

As a final point in this discussion, the equality of opportunity is a basic human right. People may not be poor because they have been left behind the rest of the world, as the Sachs hypothesis would make us believe[11]. They may be poor because of the social and economic structures they live within. Feudalism is like a fence that keeps people away from the lush pastures of opportunity. Therefore it is disappointing that the Millennium Development Goals did not more explicitly target feudalism as a cause and preserver of poverty and devise specific strategies to eradicate it. Many meetings on development around the world have repeatedly echoed this to little avail[12]. The risk is that the elements of feudalism that exist around the world will be largely ignored as they are too politically difficult to tackle. The Millennium Development Goals may just tackle the symptoms rather than the actual structural causes of poverty.

Notes

[1] http://www.abc.net.au/religion/articles/2012/07/25/3553156.htm

[2] Brown, E., A., R., (1974), The Tyranny of a construct: Feudalism and Historians of Medieval Europe, *American Historical Review,* Vol. 79, No. 4., pp. 1063-1068.

[3] According to Francis Fukuyama's hypothesis, lack of the rule of law and accountability allows a government to become easily despotic. Fukuyama, F., (2012), *The Origins of Political order: From Prehuman Times to the French Revolution,* New York, Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

[4] See: Unknown, Corruption survey revealing, *The Star Online,* Tuesday 3rd July 2012, http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2012/7/3/focus/11592606&sec=focus

[5] See: Profile: Thailand's reds and yellows, BBC News, 20th April 2010, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/8004306.stm, accessed 20th April, 2010).

[6] However even in some cases this does not change even after a revolution, *i.e.,* the fall of the Soviet Union just replaced state capitalism with 'oligarch

capitalism', the peoples revolution against Marcos did not dispose of 'crony capitalism', and the revolutions in Latin America during the 1960s and 1970s did not change the situation much. Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia are still in the balance.

[7] Williamson, O., E., (1999), *The Mechanisms of Governance,* New York & Oxford, Oxford University Press.

[8] See the current debate on this issue in Malaysia at http://malaysia-today.net/mtcolumns/newscommentaries/50917-pkr-wants-rci-on-george-kent-saga

[9] Hunter, M., (2012), *Opportunity, Strategy, & Entrepreneurship: A Meta-theory, Vol. 1,* New York, Nova Scientific Publishers, pp. 305-308.

[10] Florida, R. (2012), *The Rise of the Creative Class – Revisited: 10th Anniversary Edition – revised and Expanded,* New York, Basic Books.

[11] Sachs, J., (2005), *The End of Poverty: How we can make it happen in our lifetime,* London, Penguin.

[12] Misra, M, (2011), The Threatened Millennium Development Goals in India, *Peace & Conflict Monitor,* 3rd march, http://www.monitor.

upeace.org/archive.cfm?id_article=781, Islam, A. (2004), Health-Related Millennium Development Goals: Policy Challenges for Pakistan, *Journal of Pakistan Medical Association*, http://www.jpma.org.pk/full_article_text.php?article_id=379, Abro, H., (2011), Eliminating feudalism for an equitable socio-economic development, *Business and Financial Review,* 11th January, http://jang.com.pk/thenews/jan2011-weekly/busrev-10-01-2011/p7.htm

Cabals, Feudalism, and Apartheid: Will these institutions damn Malaysia's future prosperity?

"I am a businessman, not a politician" Tajuddin Abdul Rahman Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Agro-based Industry at the opening of Herbal Asia, Matrade Exhibition Centre, 1st October 2015.

Unlike most of the rest of the world that is heading along the track of multiculturalism, Malaysia seems to be locked in a limbo of racial introspection it cannot get out of.

This introspection is however more than mere racism, it is the overt part of an elaborate structure that has maintained a small elite in power for over 45 years, since the notorious May 13th riots back in 1969.

The direct discussion of this subject has basically been criminalized since the 1970s and deemed too sensitive to debate, which means there has been little public discourse on the matter of who really exercises power, how, and for whom within the country.

This has helped to enshrine a structure of political-cabalism, based upon a neo-Malay-feudalism, which has used a form of 'Malaysian apartheid' to support this elite in position and privilege over the rest of Malaysians they rule (as opposed to govern).

Ever since the British Colonial era, Malaysia has been divided and described through racial paradigms. The major races that represented the Malay Peninsula got together to negotiate and steer Malaya to independence in 1957, and into the Federation of Malaysia in 1963. Perhaps the most important artefact from this era is the race is still recorded on Malaysian Identity Cards today, which is hurting the sensitivities of a number of Malaysians.

However with a rekindled Malay nationalistic sentiment remerging in the 1960s, an opportunity after the 13th May 1969 racial riots arose for a group of Malay politicans to seize the reigns of power. Mahathir Mohamad, supported by a group of 'ultras' including Syed Nasir Ismail, Musa Hitam, and Tunku Razaleigh, moved to dispose of the then Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman, representing the moderate Malay aristocracy.

(Tun) Abdul Razak Hussein (father of the current Prime Minister) was installed as Prime Minister in what some describe as a 'coup' to succeed Tunku Abdul Rahman in 1970.

As Tunku Abdul Rahman had already invoked a state of emergency in 1969 after the 13th May riots, and ruled by decree through the National operations Council, (Tun) Abdul Razak as Prime Minister through was able to use this short window was to pass through the New Economic policy (NEP) without any hindrance, as parliamentary approval wasn't necessary. The NEP was based upon many ideas within Mahathir Mohamad's book The Malay Dilemma, extremely controversial at the time.

At the time, the NEP was seen, even internationally as a necessary affirmative action policy. The NEP

stipulated the use of quotas in granting educational places at school and universities, the use of quotas in the public service, favouritism to Malays in the granting of business licenses, the development of Malay reserve land restricting non-Bumiputera purchases, subsidies on the purchase of real estate, quotas on public equity holdings, general subsidies for Bumiputera businesses, and exclusive Bumiputera mutual funds (ASN, ASB), which gave better rates of return than commercial banks.

When the Malaysian Parliament was reconvened in 1971, both the Sedition and Internal Security Acts were strengthened to limit any discussion about matters concerning Malay special rights, the Malay rulers, and citizenship, under the premise of preserving 'intercommunal harmony'. These restrictions also applied to members of parliament, thus weakening the principal of 'parliamentary immunity', i.e., the NEP was above parliamentary sovereignty, which attracted much international condemnation at the time.

It is during this time that a concerted covert effort was made to create a 'secret leadership' to maintain and support what was called the 'Malay Agenda'. According to an interview with an anonymous high ranking official within the Razak Government at the

time, most executive positions, civil service placements, and high ranking police and army personnel were filled with people sympathetic to the 'Malay Agenda'.

The author's source also stated that it was during the Razak era that selected bureaucrats and other people stated creating and acquiring corporate assets with the objective of channelling funds back to UMNO to fight future elections, to ensure victory.

The 'Malay Agenda' meant running government and agencies within government with the objective of looking after 'Malay' interests ahead of others. The 'Malay Agenda' was rarely spoken about in the open but had a wide appeal among all levels of Malay society, including some members of royal families, at the time.

This was the start of crony capitalism in Malaysia, the making of a kleptocracy. This loose ruling political-cabal was developed in the Malay-feudalistic tradition, in the sense that it required giving total loyalty to the leader of UMNO, the Prime Minister, without question.

A very small proportion of this group became very rich through the implementation of this special agen-

da. These original beneficiaries are now considered socially as the 'old money' in Malay society today.

Malaysia rejected multiculturalism for its own form of ethno-religious form of 'Malaysian apartheid', supported by the Malay-feudalistic social structure that was enhanced rather than dismantled over the two decades after independence from Britain. The mythology that the Chinese, who already control the economy, also aim to take political control of Malaysia was dissipated as propaganda to install a fear into the Malay population. Propaganda became one of the prime tools used by the government with the formation of the Biro Tata Negara (BTN) to indoctrinate civil servants and students on the "Malay agenda".

Section 153 of the Malaysian constitution became the proclaimed legal basis of 'Malaysian apartheid' measures. The Reid Commission had only intended to be a temporary measure, to be reviewed by the parliament within 15 years. Section 153 states that "….it is the responsibility of the Yang Di-Pertuan Agong to safeguard the special position of the Malays and natives of any of the States of Sabah and Sarawak", thus turning Malay into political construct, as there is no single Malay tribal grouping. The authorities

over the years attempted to Malayanize the indigenous peoples of the Malay Peninsula, the Orang Asli, through encouraging their conversion to Islam and adoption of Malays customs.

When Dr. Mahathir came to the Prime Ministership in 1981 due to then Prime Minister Hussein Onn stepping down because of poor health, he pursued an ambitious agenda which included extending the business interests of UMNO. Much of these business interests were controlled by proxies and nominees such as Tajudin Ramli and Halim Saad. Further, Dr Mahathir with his Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim embarked on a program to produce Malay millionaires who would bring up other Malays into the business sphere.

Ironically under Dr. Mahathir, a period of liberalization came with Wawasan 2020, where the country grew very optimistic under the premise of 'Malaysia Boleh'. There appeared to be a great working relationship between the different racial based parties within the Barisan Nasional, and Malaysian appeared to genuinely have pride in their nation.

These short 'golden years' for Malaysia were soon eclipsed by the Asian economic crisis of 1997 and the sacking by Dr. Mahathir of his then deputy Anwar

Ibrahim in 1998. A bitter election was fought between the BN Government and newly formed Barisan Alternative in 1999, leading to the BN Government winning with a greatly reduced majority.

Many misread the Abdullah Badawi period as further liberalization, although he publically fought corruption. However, Badawi still cracked down hard on dissent such as not allowing open discussion on Malaysia's 'social contract', and allowed the police to act heavy handed at the Bersih rally in 2007. A new group of entities entered into the corporate scene which led to a number of scandals, by the notorious 'boys on the 4th floor', who included Khairy Jamaluddin. Dr. Mahathir became Badawi's chief critic. Badawi's poor election performance in 2008, and criticism of his apparent enjoyment of the trappings of power led to his replacement with Najib Tun Razak in 2009.

Najib Tun Razak came to power promising a transformation of government and a completely new paradigm in race relations with the well promoted 1Malaysia slogan. However, after being the vanguard of moderation internationally, his actions domestically showed none of the moderation he had promised. Najib was totally silent when organizations like

Pekasa made outlandish statements about race. His greatest modus operandi is silence when government organs and NGOs undertake extreme actions in defending Malays and Islam. Bajib's persona as a moderate leader completely disappeared after the poor election performance in 2013, where he personally blamed the Chinese in his 'Chinese Tsunami' statement on election night.

Post GE13, has seen a definitive return to repression by the BN Government in power. Its closely aligned newspaper organ Utusan Malaysia has been continually allowed to publish headlines and statements, such as 'Apa lagi Cina mahu', which were inflammatory in the post-election environment.

GE13 also weakened the MCA, Gerakan, and MIC to the point where they no longer have any effective say in government, a far cry from their days of great influence within the cabinet during the 1970s and 80s. All political parties became totally subservient groups within an UMNO dominated BN. This is ironically a result of opposition electoral success in 2013.

Extreme groups have been allowed to make anti-Chinese rhetoric and racial insults with impunity under the Najib Government, thus keeping Chinese

groups quiet through producing an atmosphere of fear and tension. This is a purposeful tactic to suppress any opposition.

In terms of popular vote, the BN Government is now in reality a minority one, capturing less than 50% of total votes cast. However through the first past the post voting system, the BN is almost ensured to continue winning elections in the future. This is especially the case with the poor electoral strategy that the Pakatan Rakyat employed last election, focusing on the urban areas, rather than the rural areas. To compete with the BN, the opposition must make major changes to its electoral strategy, but will come up against a 'hardened Umno' organization at grassroots level. In addition, the opposition today is in so much disarray, the effective leader of the opposition to the government appears to be Dr. Mahathir.

Rather than reaching out to win the 'hearts and minds' of all Malaysians, UMNO has seen the decline of electoral support for BN component parties as an opportunity to consolidate power within its own right. GE13 has allowed UMNO and the political-cabal that controls it to manoeuvre even more on the 'Malay Agenda'.

Since 2013, economic and social policy has been

allowed to degenerate into blatant racial discrimination, and now has become something even more sinister.

The Malaysian civil service is being cleaned out. For example in Sabah, civil servants from ethnic groups like Dusun/Kadazan are slowly being weeded out and replaced. A bureaucratic ethnic cleansing is going on within the civil service. Other indigenous ethnic groups are no longer acceptable. Likewise, the universities are being cleansed of dissidents. There is a purge going on in Malaysia that has even taken the Deputy Prime Minister and attorney general out. This is supplemented with a clampdown on 'whistleblowers, and anybody within existing agencies that have potential to turn against the political-cabal. Any potential resistance, including reporters and the media, to the political-cabal that currently controls the country is being eliminated. Malaysia is now facing a repressive phase in government that one has not seen since Dr. Mahathir's "Operation Lalang" in the late 1980s.Only this time it is much wider.

The effects of this imposed policy of 'Malaysian apartheid' upon the country today are profound, and can be summarized as follows:

1. A feudal social structure has been developed with four sections of populace;

i) The Malay elite who rules the country and their associates,

ii) A Malay middle class which is predominantly urban,

iii) A Malay rural class, and

iv) The rest of the Malaysian population.

Politically, this rural Malay class has kept the Malay elite in power, while the educated middle class is turning away from UMNO.

2. A brain drain is happening from Malaysia at present, which does not only include Chinese and Indian, but Malays as well. The political-cabal of elite leaders aren't really concerned with this brain drain, as this seen as a good opportunity to weaken potential future opposition. This loss of creative and innovative people is leaving a rent seeking mentality within the country, at a time, creativity and innovation is really needed to develop the Malaysian economy. The leadership have intentionally nurtured the development of an unquestioning population, which is reflected in the Malaysian education system, as the

best means to maintain a docile electorate that will not look at political issues like corruption very seriously.

3. There has been a general failure to eradicate poverty throughout rural Malaysia, as limited resources have been used to prop up the feudal warlords of UMNO through 'white elephant' rural development projects throughout the country. Many UMNO warlords have made it big through receiving contracts while their areas remain inadequate with basic infrastructure, and rural assistance such as farm extension services and even proper roads and irrigation. There are still large numbers of Malays who cannot afford to attend university, through the lack of any general assistance schemes available in most other countries. Poverty is still a major problem within Malaysia, where the government has been claiming undue successes.

4. The Malaysian economy is skewed with inefficiencies and market restrictions that hinder its transformation into a mature developed sustainable economic system. Companies are allowed to have monopolies, the restricted issuance of import permits has created inefficient markets, and general lack of transparency is making the Malaysian market un-

attractive to investors. A 2012 Asian Development Bank (ADB) report cites the two main reasons for Malaysia's net capital outflow as the distortions introduced into the economy by the NEP, and the widespread presence and overbearing influence of Government Linked Companies (GLCs). The restriction of tenders to Bumi companies has created an inefficient Ali Baba business model, which raises the cost of both government and business. GLCs and other government owned companies openly compete with entrepreneurs in the market with an unfair advantage, thus stifling innovation, and the willingness of private individuals to take business risks. Malaysia still needs economic growth to absorb new entrants to the workforce in the coming decade.

5. Meritocracy doesn't exist within the Malaysian civil service, universities, or other agencies. People are forced to adopt a feudal stance of seeking favour from superiors to get promotions and survive within these organizations. Under such an environment there is no chance for creativity, critical thinking, or even honesty. 'Ketuanan Melayu' is now turning hegemonic is a dangerous way that can spill off Malaysian shores. This stands Malaysian in a poor position to be internationally competitive in the future.

6. The divide and conquer political strategy of the Government, use of bullying through third party NGOs, and straight threats and arrogance has had a major effect upon the people of Malaysia. Many have lost hope and respect for the leadership of their country. Many are now resentful. There is potential for outbreaks of violence due to the uncontrollability of some extreme 'ultra' groups allowed to roam free in society today. The country thinks in terms of race, even to the point where a near diplomatic incident nearly occurred with China a few weeks ago, the second most powerful country in the world. This is not healthy and will not stand Malaysia well within the international community. The dissent generated by this 'divide and conquer' political strategy is fodder that allows the political-cabal to use state apparatus to strengthen their hold on power, as the current spate of arrests indicates.

7. What the policies of the Government and resulting social structure of society has created is a small elite class of rulers who act upon the axiom that 'we are the law'. Comments by the Defence Minister Hishammuddin Hussein (a cousin of the current prime minister), indicate the ruling elite's distain even for the constitutional monarchy of Malaysia. The elite is now in an unquestionable position

of power unable to be dislodged by the rule of law. They are unashamed by scandal and control all the elements of power through their network of loyalists through the civil service, police, armed forces, and judiciary.

8. Finally, it could be argued that Malay self-confidence has been destroyed and replaced with a national inferiority complex, that the elite can use and play to at their whim. There is a condescending attitude by the elite that 'Malays are backward' and need special protection by the BN/UMNO Government. Thus a whole section of the population is continually told they need help. The concept of 'Ketuanan Melayu', according to UKM Professor Noraini Othman has connotations of enslavement, with a Malay master and servant relationship implied. Tun Dr. Ismail Abdul Rahman went further and said that the 'special position of the Malays' in the constitution is a slur on the ability of the Malays.

The political-cabal that was set up in the 1970s by Prime Minister Tun Razak, has been transferred across from leader to leader since that time. Each prime minister inherited a complete network of loyalists to the 'Agenda Melayu'.

This has been their strength. However cracks ap-

peared in this political-cabal when Mahathir tried to make an agreement with both his successors, which according to him have not been kept. In addition, the scandals of the present prime minister are beginning to test those loyal to the "Agenda Melayu', to the point where some may begin to feel guilty about their loyalty to the current leadership of the political-cabal and 'spill the beans'. Hence the sackings, demotions, transfers and arrests of late.

This however will not mean self-destruction to Malaysia's political-cabal. It's a fight over control and not reform. Winner will take all. Perhaps Dr. Mahathir was naïve in thinking that he could still exercise control and influence over this political-cabal, once he stepped down from the leadership of UMNO and the nation. This is one of the biggest mistakes of his political career.

The very nature of UMNO itself, once a party of school teachers, junior civil servants, farmers, and fishermen, which transformed into a party of contractors, small entrepreneurs, and professional rent seekers, will serve Najib well as he tries to consolidate his position. The party is run along feudal lines where booty is distributed around the country through lucrative contracts to those who head the party at state

and district levels to maintain their loyalty and support. The influence of this on public policy and development planning is rarely discussed, even though it leads to massive misallocations of funds into projects that have little, if any community or economic benefit. This prevents any policy approach to planning and implementation, drastically lowering the quality of government.

Najib can reward his warlords, maintain their loyalty, and even put more of his loyalists in place for the coming election, win it, and even end up having more power than he has now. This scenario is Dr. Mahathir's worst nightmare, and why he is working so hard to remove Najib before the next election.

To date very few international bodies have heavily criticized this "Malaysian Apartheid". The Malaysian Government will continue to get away with repressing its populace with divide and conquer tactics. There is no front against Malaysia, like there was against South Africa. No one interested in putting sanctions upon Malaysia.

However, Swiss Islamic intellectual Dr. Tariq Ramadan foresees a credibility gap for Malaysia in international affairs where he says "As Malaysian Muslims complaining about discrimination by the West,

should first acknowledge the injustices against minorities in their own country". Until Malaysia sorts out its own racism, any stand upon Israel and Palestine seeps into hypocrisy.

This Malaysian Apartheid will continue into the foreseeable future and anybody who tries to oppose it will meet the Roth of bullying tactics to subdue them, as is being played out now with the latest round of arrests. The Malay position will remain a taboo subject for years to come, hence Malaysian sensitivities when any non-Malaysian comments on Malaysian internal affairs.

This also means that the question as to whether the NEP/NDP has been protecting or marginalizing the Malays will not be discussed. This is an important question for the future of Malaysia and the challenges that lie ahead. As former Prime Minister Ahmad Badawi once said "Malays who can't learn how to walk without crutches will end up in a wheelchair". Dr. Mahathir took this further and said "Unfortunately, the protection and privileges accorded by the New Economic Policy (NEP) may weaken the Malays further by lulling the next generation into complacency, thinking that the

NEP's affirmative action will always be there for them to fall back upon….. The NEP can make the users so dependent that their inherent capability regresses."

This dooms the country into the 'middle income trap', where the capabilities, creativity and innovation needed to lift the Malaysian economy into high valued activities, does not exist. Economic and social prosperity is risked so that Kleptocratic rule can continue unabated in Malaysia. Malay self-respect has also been sacrificed in this quest to hold power.

The system of discrimination has only benefitted in preserving a feudal hierarchy within Malaysian society where the new lords are political dynasties which are now fighting each other openly using 1MDB as the platform. This is not about corruption, but which family dynasty and surrounding group rules, rather than any promise of social reform.

Malays are second-class citizens in their own country

When I was back in Setapak Garden during the Asian financial crisis, my bedroom window looked out onto a street where there was a Chinese coffee shop and a stall selling goreng pisang in the afternoons, nearby. The coffee shop was open until 4am every night. It was full of noisy beer drinkers, singing and occasionally smashing beer bottles on the street in the early hours of the morning. In the afternoons, a young Malay guy, who lost his job during the crisis, sold goreng pisang to feed his family. Then, one day the DBKL officers came in large numbers, confiscating the stall and fining the poor guy, in what could be best described as a humiliating scene for him.

Notwithstanding all this, the coffee shop continued to open unimpeded making a racket every night.

When I was living in Alor Setar, I used to regularly visit the old Pasaraya Peladang, at Wisma PKENK. I liked this outlet because they supported all the small Malay businesses which supplied traditional Malay food products made at home. One day, some health department officers came and gave a compound to a Pakcik and Mahcik from Kuala Kedah who were supplying Paladang with a kampong made balacan. No warnings or opportunities to correct the packaging were given by the officers. No advice and assistance on how to correct it. Just a nice big compound. I could see the Pakcik, who had probably never broken any law in his life crying in the corner of the store.

When I lived at Batu 9 Berseri in Perlis, I saw many houses within the area had earthen floors, and no furniture, fridge, or TV. The people there struggled so hard to make ends meet with the jobs they could get, some paying as little as RM 20 per day at the time, while the former YB for the state assembly seat drove around his electorate in his Merc. This was an area where the weekly donations at Friday prayers didn't even reach RM200.

With all the kris waving and Ketuanan Melayu rhetoric, one would think that the above three situations would not occur within Malaysia.

Nonetheless, over the pandemic, there have been countless examples double standards, where struggling Malay hawkers were given excessive fines for breaches of Covid SOPs, while politicians have either got away without any fine, or given minimum fines.

Malays, second-class citizens?

Some of the major assumptions behind the *Ketuanan Melayu* narrative place Malays under the 'care' of their leaders. The 1971 book *Revolusi Mental*, published by UMNO portrayed Malays as weak and backward, and Mahathir Mohamed in his book *The Malay Dilemma* talked about the *'lazy Malay.'* The UMNO politicians made themselves the guardians of Malay rights. However, history since the 1970s shows how Malaysia's leaders have continually abused this self-given trust.

Ask those Malays who are self-made, and many will tell you how they feel berated, insulted and angry over such assumptions. The hardworking everyday success stories are ignored by the elite because it threatens their narratives.

The so-called privileges that Malays are supposed to get such as university scholarships, seem to go primarily to those who have connections. Many Malays feel these privileges are out of their reach and they must survive to pursue their careers and livelihoods without assistance.

One lady I spoke to at the pasar Yan in Kedah asked me around 2004, how would the biotechnology industry (launched with much fanfare at the time) benefit her community.

Ketuanan Melayu and the whole subject of privileges has divided society and created undue anger and disgust towards the Malay population. Gone are the old days when communities comprised of all races would celebrate each other's festivals over the year together.

For the average Malay in Alor Setar, Muar, Rompin, or Taiping, they are ignored by the body politic, and they are scorned through social media by non-Malays for being proclaimed by the elite as the chosen people.

The *Ketuanan Melayu* narrative has destroyed Malay confidence and self-esteem. Malays have been told for generations to appreciate UMNO for all that

has been done for them. The politicians expect this gratitude to be eternal. This is a demeaning way of soliciting political support, best described by the Malay word 'ungkit', meaning expecting something back for kindness, something contrary to the true Malay culture of 'ihklas'.

The concept of 'hamba' or subordinate is embedded into everyday life. Getting overseas university scholarship, employed by the premier GLCs like Petronas, Sime Darby, and Maybank require knowing people in the right places. Being promoted also requires connections to get to the very top.

In meetings, Malays dare not outshine the boss, don't show they are more intelligent than others, maintain subservience to superiors or be ostracized by the rest of the group as punishment. There is no recognition of meritocracy for upward career mobility. In fact, a Sime Darby company manager told me once, that if you don't have a 'godfather' higher up, your career will most likely stall at managerial level.

Even the poor Malays in Berseri Perlis had to lease stalls that were developed by the federal government, especially for them, in a poverty alleviation project at Empangan Timah Tasoh. The people who got the leases for the gerai were connected rent-seeking Ma-

lays who had strong connections with a former chief minister in Perlis. They rented out the gerai to the poor Malays in Berseri at rents they couldn't afford to make their micro-businesses viable.

Malaysia has become a social-economy designed so the rich, connected and powerful can exploit the rest.

Malay society's feudal hierarchy

Malay society is formally structured. At the top are the royal households, followed by political leaders, political warlords, senior civil servants, the professional class, middle class, with the rural Malays at the bottom.

The upper classes rarely mix socially with the bottom classes. The entrenched position of the upper classes is full of symbols and artefacts like royal titles, VVIP customer rooms in government buildings, VVIP car parking spaces in hotels, and exclusive motor vehicle number plates. Although dark tinted windows are prohibited in Malaysia, many luxury cars with special plates and tinted glass can be seen along the roads each day.

There are signs of feudal Malaysia everywhere.

Religion has taken away Malay citizen's rights

With the rapid spread of Islamic quasi-government bureaucracy and Syariah jurisprudence, the relative civil and legal rights of Malay Malaysian citizens are actually less than non-Muslim citizens. Syariah courts put extra legal restrictions upon Malays and regulation prevents Malays taking up certain jobs within the entertainment and tourism industries. In addition, state religious authorities have their own 'morality' officers who proactively seek out Malays who have broken religious codes, often breaching the right to privacy.

Public speaking about issues related to Islam are subject to strict permission. Some forms of beliefs and practices of Islam that differ from state sanctioned Islam are suppressed, banned, or harassed. Islamic authorities have become so strict, the very freedom to practice Islam in one's own spiritual way is regulated. Religion has been turned into state sanction and law. Islam has become an instrument of domination, rather than a spiritual experience.

Yet this enormous Islamic bureaucracy cannot even guarantee the food Muslims eat is actually truly halal. There was the meat substitution scandal and

allegations of corruption within the JAKIM halal protocols that have been covered up by both Pakatan Harapan and Perikatan Nasional ministers. No MPs from PAS, UMNO, or Bersatu have taken up the cause of halal integrity.

The arts and media industry are now subject to so much moral censorship, even the old P. Ramlee films made back in the 1960s would not pass the censor board today. Even investigative journalism that exposes the excesses of the crony capitalism and corruption are clamped down upon.

Malay inequality is most evident within the business sector

The inequality of Malays is most evident within the business sector. Connections are needed for almost everything. People need 'cabals' to get licences, approved permits to import a wide range of items, and even bank loans. Not all Malay enterprises can obtain contracts with ministries, government departments, and agencies. There is usually a single firm or person as a gatekeeper, monopolizing and/or blocking fair trade.

Getting a bank loan, or an occupation or business license isn't always straight forward, where most often extra payments are required to process applications. Small businesses, taxi drivers, importers, and traders most often require 'middlemen' who hold approvals and licenses they need to work or operate their businesses.

The New Economic Policy (NEP) has totally failed to provide equality of opportunity for all Malays. It has been manipulated to favour an elite business class over the rest of the Malay population. The NEP must be seen for the instrument it really is. Its an instrument to maintain the domination of one group over another. The major attribute that leads to success in Malay business is not what you know, but who you know. Only those connected Malay contractors in the state could obtain business from the state government, leaving those without these connections without any share of the work.

The proof of the pudding is that government, no matter which side of politics is in control, is run by the same privileged group of politicians who are keeping out young blood from rising in the ranks of politics and government. One of the recent insights into this privilege, is the RM76.4 million land given

to former prime minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi for services to government. His lifetime salaries and pension as a former prime minister wasn't enough.

The NEP did contribute greatly to the creation of a Malay middle class over the last fifty years. However, those who benefitted most were Malays who were connected or able to join the ranks of the establishment. The issue today is the marginalized communities comprising of all Malaysians. This is why poverty alleviation policies must be based upon need in the future.

The biggest problem in Malaysia is not race politics. The biggest problem is class domination. This is a subject the politicians don't want you to talk about.

The Dark Forces Changing Malaysian Society

Malaysia was once a harmonious society, where the different ethnic groups coexisted with a sense of community, and each ethnic group once openly celebrated festivals together. All the ethnic groups were free to express their cultures, and practice their religions without interference. Malaysia had a strong and stable government with a working multi-racial coalition. All of the nation's citizens were once proud to be Malaysian.

Malaysia once lived up to the tourist slogan 'Malaysia, Truly Asia'.

There are many forces that have dramatically changed Malaysian society over the last 50 years. Tanah Melayu has changed from a rich multi-cultural society, that was appreciated by all, towards an insular narrow thinking one, where minority groups have become disconnected from the cultural, political, and social directions the country is now headed.

The product of this changing Malaysia is the current budget delivered by the new Ismail Sabri Yakoob government just recently. This budget has been criticised from many quarters. The budget is being charged as being unfair to all citizens, and totally lacking empathy towards the suffering Rakyat during this Covid crisis. Former minister Zaid Ibrahim said that Malaysia is the only country in the world that has a race specific budget.

The rest of this article will look at the factors that have brought Malaysia to this point.

The Forces changing Malaysian society

1. Changing demographics -distinct population change

Since 1970, Malaysia has undergone a massive demographic change. According to census statistics in

1970, 53% of Malaysia's population of 8.3 million people where Bumiputera, while 35.5% were Chinese, and 10.6% were of Indian origin. This compares to 2019 estimates where 62.5% are Bumiputera (51% Malay origin), 20.6% Chinese, and 6.2% Indian.

After encouragement for families to have more children, the total fertility rate (TFR) rose to 5 children per woman. This TFR was much higher among Malays and rural people. There was also massive migration of Indonesians to the peninsula, and Sabah over a number of decades. This has pushed the national population up to 33.5 million people.

More than 1.8 million Malaysians have left the country, where the vast majority are Chinese seeking better educational and job opportunities. The current net migration rate is 1.49 per 1,000, ranking 55 in the world. Those Malays leaving the country, tend to be the more liberal thinking, leaving behind a more conservative Malay group in the country.

Malaysia has been subjected to a major clandestine social engineering project. The above demographic changes had a massive influence on the national mindset and outpouring narratives. One can observe the decrease of liberalism within society, where those who have liberal ideas criticized for

daring to be liberal. There is an increasing censorship within the entertainment industry (local film and drama production). The local news media practices self-censorship out of fear of displeasing the government. Investigative journalism inside Malaysia has all but disappeared.

2. The New Economic Policy

The New Economic Policy (NEP) was designed in 1970 to increase Bumiputera participation in the economy. Equity rather than income was chosen as the measure, shaping both economic and social policy since.

At a deeper level, the NEP represented a dramatic change from Tunku Abdul Rahman's multi-cultural Malaysia, towards a Malay-centric orientated policy mantra. To Malaysia, the NEP didn't just bring positive discrimination towards Bumiputeras. The NEP signified heavy socialist like government intervention into the economy, creating highly regulated markets, where GLCs moved into strategic business areas, pushing out private enterprise. The NEP also gave birth to cronyism, corruption, and kleptocracy.

3. Islamization

Former prime minister Mahathir Mohamed and his then deputy Anwar Ibrahim Islamized Malaysia's public administration during the 1990s. This led to the formation of the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM), within the prime minister's department (PMO) in 1997, with sweeping influence over Islamic affairs across the nation. JAKIM received RM1.4 billion from the 2022 budget. In addition, the power of the Syariah legal system has been widely increased, bringing a two-tier legal system to Malaysia.

Islamization has greatly weakened secularism in government. This has led to an almost complete dropping of the RUKUN NEGARA or national principles, as a guiding ideology inside the civil service and public education.

Socially and culturally, Islamization has seen the modification of Bahasa Kebangsaan or the national language with Arabic words and phrases. Arabism is replacing many artifacts of Malay culture. Tolerance towards the practice of traditional Islamic beliefs and rituals that Malays have practised for hundreds of years has been discouraged.

The forces of Islamization are also coming from

outside the government, which is now a major influence upon the executive, administration, civil service, and public education. The well-funded Salafi leaning Alumni, a group of partly foreign paid graduates who work inside government and education have a subliminal mission to spread their influence through their workplaces and communities. This hidden pressure group, 25,000 strong, has enormous influence on government.

4. The influence of PAS

The Parti Islam Se-Malaysia or PAS has played a key role in influencing the direction of politics and society in Malaysia. The platform of PAS has always been to develop Malaysia as an Islamic state. The PAS ideology has gone from Malay nationalism, being inspired by the Iranian revolution, moderate Erdoganism, and linkages to the Muslim Brotherhood.

Within the political landscape, PAS has influenced Malaysian politics from the opposition, and within government. At present PAS has 18 members in the Dewan Rakyat and 3 ministers, including the coveted religious affairs portfolio, and 7 deputy ministers. PAS currently controls the Kelantan, Terengganu, and Kedah state governments. PAS potentially plays a kingmaking role among the Malay parties.

PAS has influenced the state of politics, particularly within the Malay heartlands. Malay parties like UMNO and Bersatu have been forced to prove their Islamic credentials, inorder to be electorally competitive. As PAS has become more influenced by the Ulama faction within the party, Islamic narratives have become much stronger.

PAS is staunchly pro-Palestinian, and strongly supports Hudud laws. The PAS state government in Kelantan bans traditional Malay dance theatres, advertising depicting women not fully clothed, enforces women wearing headscarves, and segregated check-out aisles in supermarkets. Recently, the PAS International Affairs and External Relations Committee chairman Muhammad Khalil Abdul Hadi congratulated the Taliban on their takeover of Kabul.

5. The Civil Service

The civil service is one of the most powerful influences upon Malaysian society. It is primarily mono-ethnic and doesn't represent the ethnic diversity of the nation. As such, this massive two million employee multi-ministry, department, and agency apparatus is one-dimensional in its corporate culture.

During the 18 months Pakatan Harapan was gov-

ernment, some ministers found it extremely difficult to assert their will over their assigned ministries. Over time, due to the cornerstone NEP, a 'Malay agenda' culture has developed, designed to cater to ethnic-Malays and little else. This has created a collective narcissist, inward looking, overly sensitive mindset. There is an extremely strong power-distance relationship between superiors and subordinates, where subordinates are not encouraged to question their superiors. Leaders often feel self-important, and behave like 'little Napoleons', as described by former prime minister Abdul Ahmad Badawi.

There are instances where departments 'go rogue', not following their minister's instructions. The Selangor Islamic Department (JAIS) in 2014 conducted raids with the police on the Malaysian Bible Society, that were embarrassing for the then opposition led Pakatan government.

Corruption is endemic, with numerous methods used to profit from public funds.

For all intents and purposes, the civil service is the real government. Due to little public transparency, the civil service is a law unto itself, mostly beyond public scrutiny. Today, the civil service directly employs 11.8 percent of the country's total workforce,

continuing to grow due to the government's belief in heavy market intervention. The newly released RM12 document has confirmed this.

6. The Malay Elite

The structure and fabric of Malaysian power are made up of a patriarchal elite Malay hierarchy. At the top are the royal families, which yield a symbolic cultural authority. Next are the long-established political families who have been involved at the forefront of politics and government since independence. Next is a network of political warlords spreading down to the village level. These warlords operate under the patronage and in-turn provide support to the leaders of the political families.

Alongside these groups are lines of Islamic clerics, who create religious legitimacy. Then comes a large sway of civil servants whose loyalty is to the Malay agenda rather than the government of the day and who caused chaos for the multiracial Pakatan Harapan government. Connected professionals and businesspeople complete the make-up of the Malay gentry.

Since independence, political control has been concentrated within a few elite Malay families. Ma-

laysia's second prime minister Tun Abdul Razak's son Najib Razak was also a serving prime minister and remains extremely powerful within UMNO today despite the 1MDB scandal. Onn Ja'afar's son Hussein Onn became the third Malaysian prime minister. Hussein Onn's son Hishammuddin Hussein is still powerful within UMNO and served as minister for defense, transport, home affairs, and youth and culture respectively. Khairy Jamaluddin, the current defense minister, is the son in law of former prime minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi. Mahathir Mohamed's son Mukhriz Mahathir was the Kedah chief minister twice and former minister of international trade.

Anwar Ibrahim was deputy prime minister, his wife Wan Azizah Wan Ismail was also a deputy prime minister, while their daughter Nurul Izzah Anwar is a member of parliament. In addition, members of these elite families are intermarried to each other, royalty, diplomats, judges, and other senior Malays. These dynasties also exist at regional political warlord level, as is the case with former minister and parliamentary member for Arau, Shahidan Kassim, whose brother Ismail Kassim is involved in local state politics. There is also a mixture of mutual business interests, and opaque influence.

When Pakatan Harapan defeated the Barisan Nasional in the May 2018 national election, part of this elite grouping took power in a different configuration. The administration of the current beleaguered Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin is yet just a reconfiguration of the same people, as is the reconfiguration into the Ismail Sabri administration. Malay politics is more about the dynamics of these families than about policy and ideology. Malay politics has been primarily about feuds and alliances rather than vision.

7. The Education System – the younger generation indoctrinated

The emphasis on Islamic education over the last three generations has shaped the Malay psych. Islam has become the central pillar of Malay life. This influence has become so strong, the rest of the community feel obligated to conform.

This has deeply altered Malay culture towards Arabism, where much of the richness of Malay tradition has disappeared. Traditional Malay identity is quickly disappearing. Today's value set is biased in favour of an Islamic society, rather than secularism. This has been a major factor in dividing communities that were once very cohesive, especially at the local com-

munity level. Today, a major part of Malay society is subservient to authority, and self-segregating. This is in stark contrast to the multi-ethnic sense of community 50 years ago.

Institutions of public higher public education have become Malay bastions. They are managed by Malay top and middle management, with primarily Malay academics, for primarily Malay students. These institutions see the imposition of the 'Malay agenda' part and parcel of education. Just like the civil service, public education has been Islamized by Ikramise, and the Alumni.

The new generations behave much more religiously than the generations before them. There are signs a proportion of the younger generations are much more sympathetic towards more radical Islamic theologies. With students immersed within these institutions and Tahfiz school system, education has played a major role in shaping today's society.

8. The royal households – customs & constitutional authority

Malaysian royalty is technically a constitutional monarchy. Yet the monarchy is at the apex of an ancient Malay class-based authoritarian feudal system

with all its artefacts, ceremonies, customs, and language. To some degree, Malaysia can still be seen as a patriarchy rather than a democracy. The last two administration were created in the Istana, rather than on the floor of the Dewan Rakyat or lower house of parliament.

The Malay monarchy is embedded deep within the Malay psyche, giving them patriarchal authority. The sultan is head of Islam in each respective state as well as defender of Malay and indigenous rights. The rise of Ketuanan Melayu narratives after the New Economic Policy was introduced has strengthened the monarchy's position even more.

There is a degree of absolute power in the hands of the monarchs that doesn't devolve to other constitutional royal families. They can appoint a chief minister from their respective state assemblies without their picks being tested. They have used these powers to appoint the chief minister they want over the candidate from the largest party or coalition in the state assembly.

The monarchy's influence over the political arena extends well beyond appointments. The government had to back down on ratifying the Rome Statute when the Johor Sultan argued that the treaty on

crimes against humanity, genocide, and war crimes would undermine Islam, the Malays, and the monarchy.

The monarchy has enormous informal power. Sultans hold regular weekly meetings with their executive councils, providing an opportunity each week to give views on the running of the state to the chief minister and executive councilors.

Section 44 of the constitution places the Agong beside the Senate and House of Representatives with responsibility for legislative power. Some loyal groups see the Sultan as the absolute law, more trustworthy than politicians who come and go. Article 153 of the Constitution gives the Agong the power to safeguard the position of the Malays (and indigenous peoples). A strong sense of Malay identity maintains the traditional feudal cultural environment which has a long history.

This is a continuation of the long-standing social contract between the Sultan and the Rakyat (people), something that existed long before the formation of Malaysia. This can't be seen at a national level but is extremely important at the state level.

Thus, in the eyes of many government servants,

loyalty to "Tuanku" overrides loyalty to the democratically elected government.

9. The Special branch and security mechanisms

Malaysia's Special Branch, a secretive division within the Royal Malaysian Police force (PDRM), has functioned as one of the country's most covert units, or did until earlier this year, when the human rights NGO Suhakam accused it of being behind the disappearance of two social activists, Amri Che Mat and Pastor Raymond Koh.

As a colonial creation, the Special Branch has never been legitimized by act of Parliament, It has, no public charter, and reports neither to the National Parliament or the executive. It became an arm of the police organizational structure with a director who reported to the Director General of Police (IGP). The only indication of its mission and objectives are on the police website, stating that it is"responsible for collecting and processing security intelligence to preserve the law and order of the public and maintain Malaysia's peace and security."

Today it conducts surveillance, intelligence gathering, and infiltrations that span all aspects of Malaysian society including religious organizations,

mosques, churches, and temples, Chinese schools, universities, the state and federal civil services, government agencies, local government, trade unions, NGOs, media organizations, social activists, and even Royal households.

Today, the SB has a budget of more than RM500 million, which doesn't include the slush funds it has to run secret and sensitive operations. Over the last decade SB staff have more than doubled to over 10,000. This doesn't include 10-15,000 informers that the SB is handling across the country. This represents about one SB operative to 1,500 citizens, a ratio not unlike the old East German secret police, the Stasi.

10. The judiciary

There is a prima facie case that the judiciary is used as a tool of government to harass and neutralize opposition politicians. Most noteworthy were the 1998 and 2008 Sodomy charges, convictions and jail terms given to opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim. Another case is the discharge of all graft charges against Lim Guan Eng, after he was appointed finance minister in the Pakatan Harapan government back in 2018. The most recent example of potential executive interference in the judiciary is the granting of passports to convicted former prime minister Najib Razak, his

wife Rosmah Mansor, UMNO president Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, and UMNO lawyer Muhammad Shafee Abdullah, both facing court cases for corruption and money laundering.

11. Rewriting history

Malaysia's history has been rewritten within the ideologies of race, religion, and exclusion. Modern textbooks have been written to accommodate the 'Malay agenda' arguments. Historical facts are either discarded of reinterpreted to suit Malay-centric ideologies. For example, Hari Merdeka is celebrated over Malaysia Day, even though Hari Merdeka occurred before Malaysia actually existed. Hari Merdeka is the celebration of a country that no longer exists.

History has been rewritten with the theme that Malay history belongs only to the Malays, which actually contradicts the concept that Malaysian monarchs are monarchs for all citizens. Non-Malays are then painted as pendatangs, or new comers, who have no psychological or emotional stake in the concept of Malaysian statehood.

The modern interpretation of Malaysian history has become a force of division rather than unity of all citizens.

12. Corruption – 1MDB is only the tip of the iceberg

Corruption is endemic, with numerous methods used to profit from public funds. Some officers in areas close to the procurement process set up small trading companies which supply items not subject to tender such as office furniture, fixtures, stationary, printing, and computer equipment at inflated prices to their respective departments or ministries.

Other misuses occur through false travel and accommodation claims, and payments for goods not supplied or work not done. Tenders are often manipulated to hand out construction jobs to specific companies. Assets are sometimes misappropriated for personal use.

Numerous guilty parties to acts of fraud and corruption have escaped prosecution due to relationships high-ranking civil servants have with each other. Others escape prosecution because heads of departments and ministries don't want any scandals to go public, preferring cover-ups. Many departments and agencies within the civil service are so much under the control of a single person or select group that corruption or wrongdoing is nearly impossible to detect.

Institutions are hesitant to investigate those involved in corrupt acts and bribery, tending to cover up and hide any misdemeanors. This institutional attitude creates a belief on the part of culprits, they will never be held accountable.

A survey by University Malaysia Kebangsaan (UKM) found that 30.5 percent of respondents were open to accepting bribes if they had the power and opportunity. Further research found that all civil service campaigns, policies introduced, and Islamization have not affected civil servants' involvement in performing acts of bribery and corruption.

13. Repression of opposition through narratives (customs)

Malaysia's narratives espoused by Malay political parties deny the cascade of alternative realities possible for Malaysia. The sense of national pride from the 1980s and early 1990s has been replaced with a depressing siege-like mentality against an imaginary enemy.

This is used as a cover against potentially damaging truths that may destroy the 'Malay persona'. For example, the Timah whiskey controversy arose just when the Pandora papers were released and mem-

bers of the UMNO 'court cluster' had their passports returned to them by the court.

The myth of the 'Malay plight of needing a defender' is a tool to promote conformity, subservience, and gratitude towards the Malay elite. Crooks are reframed as Robinhoods and Bossku, heroes of the people. Islam is state defined rather than something that should be inside the souls of believers.

Different points of view seen as critical of the establishment, are reframed as being attacks on the mythical concept of 'Malay unity'. The national narrative has destroyed Malay self-confidence. Ketuanan Melayu according to a UKM professor Noraini Othman has connotations of enslavement, with a Malay master and servant relationship implied.

Some Conclusions to think about

The Malaysian economy is akin to a centrally planned economy with high government intervention, high market regulation, restrictive equity rules, and government linked companies (GLCs) occupying many strategic business sectors. Malaysia has become a kleptocracy, where rent seeking is preferrable to innovation. The brain drain doesn't just include individuals, it also carries out corporations, as the Grab experience indicates.

Household income inequality is rising as is reflected in the rise in the GINI index over the last decade to over 40. Poverty is on the increase. Malay culture is under constant attack by cultural vandals. Malays are getting sick of being told they need assistance. These types of narratives are destructive to the Malay psych.

The standard of public institutions is waning, as is the efficiency of the bloated civil service. Malaysian defence forces have declined from being one of the best in the region, to a position where Malaysia's military forces won't be able to respond to the strategic challenges of the region.

Malaysia is becoming a neo-feudal state, run by a bickering elite, who can't be questioned. Any truth has multiple layers. Racism is only a symptom of a problem much deeper, the domination of all citizens by a small Malay elite.

Its highly unlikely Malaysia will become a multi-cultural democracy anywhere in the near future. What is most likely for Malaysia is that it will continue to be ruled by the Malay elite, in some form of power sharing arrangement, which is playing out now. Islam is the biggest threat to the power of the Malay elite. There is always risk that there could be a popular Islamic movement to dispel the Malay elite,

however the Islamists within Malaysia are far from united. The Salafists tend to be apolitical, and the Erdoganists aspire to work within the parliamentary system. What is most likely, is the Malay political parties will share power with the Islamists via PAS, steering Malaysia towards some form of a pseudo-Islamic state.

Any alternative rebirth of Malaysia will require the scrapping of the race-based political system. Race based idealism must be replaced with policy-based idealism, where governments work upon a platform based on consensus. This is unlikely to happen.

Malaysia: Permanent Ethnic Malay Polity

Institutions put in place decades ago continue to shape the country's political destiny

The February putsch of the ineffective and sabotaged Pakatan Harapan government by the makeshift flag-of-convenience Perikatan Nasional, which is comprised of an alignment of Malay-centric political parties, is the natural order for Malaysia, made possible by Machiavellian betrayal, a common trait in Malay politics since independence in 1957.

What is very Malay about the grab for power currently underway in parliament is that the change of government was not as a result of a defeat at the polls or on the floor of the parliament, but rather a decision made by the traditional Malay patriarch, the Yang Di-Pertuan Agong – the current king, Sultan Abdullah Sultan Ahmad.

The structure and fabric of Malaysian power are made up of a patriarchal elite Malay hierarchy. At the top are the royal families, which yield a symbolic cultural authority. Next are the long-established political families who have been involved at the forefront of politics and government since independence. Next is a network of political warlords spreading down to the village level. These warlords operate under the patronage and in-turn provide support to the leaders of the political families.

Alongside these groups are lines of Islamic clerics, who create religious legitimacy. Then comes a large sway of civil servants whose loyalty is to the Malay agenda rather than the government of the day and who caused chaos for the multiracial Pakatan Harapan government. Connected professionals and businesspeople complete the make-up of the Malay gentry.

Malaysia, once seen as a multicultural nation, has been incrementally traveling down the path of monoculturalism. In 1957, Chinese comprised about 40 percent of the population. That has shrunk to about 23 percent today. Any ideas promoting a true multi-cultural Malaysia were politically resisted.

One of the founders of the United Malays National Organization, Onn Ja'afar, called for UMNO membership to be open for all races and renaming the party the United Malayan National Organization. That wasn't accepted by UMNO regional warlords, forcing Onn Ja'afar to leave UMNO and form a non-communal Independence Party of Malaya Party in 1951. Lee Kwan Yew called for the discriminatory section of the Malaysian constitution providing for special provisions for the Malays to be scraped, with a vision of a Malaysian Malaysia. Lee fell into conflict with then Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman, with the result that Singapore was expelled from Malaysia in 1965.

The masterpiece of social engineering was the formulation and enactment of the New Economic Policy (NEP), in 1971, in response to the bloody race riots on May 13, 1969, that took hundreds of lives, the nation was socially engineered towards a mono-

cultural state. The formal intention was to bring Malays on par with other races, specifically in economic matters. However, then Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak and following administrations extended NEP principles across all aspects of society, including, quotas in the civil service, education, the military forces, the formation of special purpose government agencies, and even discounts on buying properties. Positive discrimination for Malays has become deeply institutionalized and has deep influence upon the nature of Malaysian society today.

Three generations of Malays have now been educated through the local system, which has rewritten history to espouse the justification of their special privileges. Islam has been reframed to become a tool of exclusion, rather than a doctrine of social inclusion. The psyche of Malays today is much more insular than it was 30 years ago. Language and greetings have been Arabized, which has separated Malays even more from other ethnic groups. The Malay monoculture is now the norm.

The Malaysian civil service is deeply embedded with Malay cultural practices and ethics. The so-called "Malay agenda" is seen over by an elite *apparat*. The military forces have been purged of ethnic

diversity, and a politicalized reserve of senior officers is in place. Academics and administrative staff of Malaysia's public universities are primarily Malay. Government-linked companies and sovereign corporations like Petronas, Sime Darby and Khazanah are filled with Malay professionals.

The economy is skewed towards favoring Malay interests through monopoly, regulation and the dominance of GLCs in particular sectors. The legal system also appears rigged to favor the elite as was seen in the recent incident in which Riza Aziz, the stepson of the disgraced former Prime Minister Najib Razak, escaped prosecution for his part in the 1MDB scandal. Now the narrative is changing over the Najib case, with the defense are saying public opinion is heavily against conviction despite the loss of US$4.8 billion in the scandal.

There are two streams of Islam that are reinforcing polarization. One is overt, full of rhetoric, the political Islam of the rural fundamentalist Parti Islam se-Malaysia or PAS, inspired by the Muslim Brotherhood. This rhetoric appeals to the souls of Malays, who are all Muslims. Islam is a powerful part of the persona in which any mockery towards Islam is usually framed as an attack on Malays.

A bogeyman has been created, a mythical evil, which is the enemy of Malays portrayed and defended by groups, in the image of the old Malay warriors. A recent Malay Dignity Congress was a rallying of the elite Malays to defend the interests of the weak. The calls to ban alcohol by PAS, and subsequent statements by ministers are overt proclamations of Malaysia's monoculture. Likewise, former deputy prime minister Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, who raised controversy in 2018 over her objections to child marriage, indicated the strong influence of political Islam on Malay society.

Thus, open discussion about special privileges and the Malay agenda is deemed sensitive to Malays. The mythology of the social contract has become sacred. Its manifestation as *Ketuanan Melayu* or Malay supremacy will come down hard, through intimidation, on anyone brave enough to question it.

The second stream of Islam is covert. Individuals who have returned from studying in the Middle East, or UK, have formed an influential alumni always looking to further the cause of Islam within their spheres of influence at the workplace. The alumni have infiltrated the civil service, education system, military, GLCs, and Islamic organizations such as

IKRAM. Muhyiddin Yassin has sought support from the organization's de facto leader, the Perlis Mufti, Dr. Asri Zainul Abidin, known as Dr. Maza.

Since independence, political control has been concentrated within a few elite Malay families. Malaysia's second prime minister Tun Abdul Razak's son Najib Razak was also a serving prime minister and remains extremely powerful within UMNO today despite the 1MDB scandal. Onn Ja'afar's son Hussein Onn became the third Malaysian prime minister. Hussein Onn's son Hishammuddin Hussein is still powerful within UMNO and served as minister for defense, transport, home affairs, and youth and culture respectively. Khairy Jamaluddin, the current defense minister, is the son in law of former prime minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi. Mahathir Mohamed's son Mukhriz Mahathir was the Kedah chief minister twice and former minister of international trade.

Anwar Ibrahim was deputy prime minister, his wife Wan Azizah Wan Ismail was also a deputy prime minister, while their daughter Nurul Izzah Anwar is a member of parliament. In addition, members of these elite families are intermarried to each other, royalty, diplomats, judges, and other senior Malays. These dynasties also exist at regional political war-

lord level, as is the case with former minister and parliamentary member for Arau, Shahidan Kassim, whose brother Ismail Kassim is involved in local state politics. There is also a mixture of mutual business interests, and opaque influence.

When Pakatan Harapan defeated the Barisan Nasional in the May 2018 national election, part of this elite grouping took power in a different configuration. The administration of the current beleaguered Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin is yet just a reconfiguration of the same people. Malay politics is more about the dynamics of these families than about policy and ideology. Malay politics has been primarily about feuds and alliances rather than vision.

These family dynamics pose questions. The Sarawak Report recently claimed that the present finance minister Tengku Zafrul, reportedly a relative of Muhyiddin, played a role with the palace when the king was making a decision on whom to support. The truth of this will remain a secret of the elite.

The grip of elite families on Malaysian politics has squeezed out potential new political talent and leadership. Muhyiddin's cabinet is not based upon meritocracy but rather support, patronage and payback. It's a configuration of political elite and warlords.

There is no shared ideology or vision binding them together.

Structural and institutional factors combined will ensure Malaysia will remain a monocultural Malay state. As Malay birth rates have far exceeded those of other racial groups, the Malays are the dominant grouping in the country. The first-past-the-post electoral system ensures that only representatives with polarized views will win a majority in single-member constituencies. The electoral system is biased against bringing diversity into the parliament.

The two electoral wildcards Sabah and Sarawak have historically shown that political groupings there, also follow patronage politics. Malaysia is really Malaya plus two (Sabah and Sarawak) today. The Chinese-dominated Democratic Action Party has been banished to Penang, which will remain the party's only sphere of influence.

The Malay elite are yet to complete their fight for power. The demise of the Barisan Nasional destroyed the country's political stability, which the multicultural Pakatan Harapan was unable to replace. It was only able to disturb the Malay political paradigm in the 2018 general election due to special circumstances – a vengeful former and future Prime Minister

Mahathir Mohamad on a crusade against a corrupt Najib.

Once again, there will be a fierce Malay political fight in a Malay state over the coming months, with the winner to take all.

How the Malay elite hijacked Malaysia

Malaysia's privileged divide

With the United Malays National Organization, or UMNO back in political power with a firm and dominating position to the other Malay-centric political parties, kleptocratic practices are on the rise once again. The myth that UMNO is the defender of the marginalized Malays is clearly tarnished for all to see. The New Economic Policy (NEP), its derivatives, and the ideology of Ketuanan Melayu, or Malay supremacy have been exposed for what they really are.

The Malay polity and their cohorts once again control government administration and are clearly looking after their own. The rest of Malaysia's citizens have been largely left to fend for themselves. Suffered greatly during the Covid crisis, the establishment have been getting richer. Corruption, enrichment, favouritism, and blatant disregard to the process of law is the signature of this government.

The Ismail Sabri government appears to represent patriarchal elite Malay society. At the centre are long established political families who have been involved in the forefront of political and government, since independence. They have appeased the royal families, which provide symbolic authority to give legitimacy.

This elite is supported by a nexus of political warlords spreading down to the village level across the Malay peninsula. These warlords operate under patronage and in-turn provide a powerbase to the leaders of political families. Then comes a large group of the country's civil servants whose loyalty is to the Malay agenda rather than the government of the day. A professional class running the nation's banks, GLC's, and government agencies have strong vested interests with those of the ruling elites. Finally, the nation's elites have made a pact with the Islamic clerics to create religious legitimacy.

A diverse feudal-like grouping

The Malay establishment is not a unified group. Its an umbrella of different institutions and organizations with varying missions and objectives. Most are in competition with each other for power and influence. Nevertheless, they are politically interconnected, and fall in and out of alliances with each other. Most often, the most powerful interconnections are informal and based on personal relationships rather than ideologies.

The Malay establishment is best seen as being a group of smaller empires that have their own sectional interests. Some of these institutions and organizations include, the Conference of Rulers, individual royal households, the prime minister, Malay-centric political parties, the Department of Islamic Development or JAKIM, the ministry of education, ministry of home affairs, ministry of finance, the civil service, some of the larger GLCs, the armed forces, and the police (special branch). Some more covert organizations like the Alumni, a group of Salafi-leaning Malay professionals entrenched within government and commerce also exercise considerable influence.

This all blends in to form the Malay establishment. The dynamics, interrelationships, and alliances con-

tinually change. For example, there is currently some friction between a number of royal households and JAKIM over the scope and jurisdiction of the later at state level. Relationships appear to be more transactional, than based upon any common visions about the future of Malaysia. Other organizations such as the judiciary, the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC), immigration, and local government are most often tools of the establishment. Any organization or individual outside these groupings is considered outsiders.

UMNO is back as patriarchal head of the Malay establishment once again as it controls the government, GLCs, many of the state governments, and has good relationships with most of the royal houses.

The biggest assets: no accountability, no transparency

The Malay establishment is able to make decisions, implement policies, undertake business, and carry out corrupt practices without scrutiny from the public. Only brave journalists and news portals, most of who have been persecuted and prosecuted were able to expose a number of corruption scandals over the decades in Malaysia. These include Bumiputera Malaysia Finance scandal of 1982, Bank Negara Ma-

laysia's RM32 billion foreign exchange losses during the 1980s and 90s, the French Scorpene-class submarine scandal of 2002, the National Feedlot scandal of 2012, the 1MDB scandal going back to 2012, the Wang Kelian scandal of 2017, and the meat substitution scandal at the end of last year.

These are only the top of the iceberg. There are many other scandals the public doesn't even know about hidden away within ministries, agencies and state government agencies, and GLCs. Most don't come to light because of the harsh treatment of whistle-blowers, and the use of the Official Secrets Act (OSA) to cover up exclusive contracts given to favoured companies.

There is a growing clampdown on press freedom in Malaysia. Online news portals operate in the fear that their licenses won't be renewed or shutdown the then provocative The Malaysian Insider in 2016. Most domestic news portals practice self-censorship due to harsh defamation laws that gravely hinder investigative journalism. Nothing has been officially done to investigate allegations against former Bank Negara Malaysia governor Zeti Akhtar Aziz and family members involvement in the 1MDB scandal.

There is no Freedom of Information legislation, and only scant details of Auditor General reports

make public news. The standard operating procedure of government appears to be just allowing embarrassing news about corruption to publicly blow over and be forgotten by the public.

The anti-corruption framework is weak, grossly under-resourced and potential MACC prosecutions need approval from the Attorney General, who is a political appointment.

Many within the civil service caught undertaking illegal acts are not reported to anti-corruption investigators. Many scandals are just swept under the carpet to protect prominent people and the reputation of the institutions involved. This creates the belief among many in powerful positions they will not face any sanctions or justice, if caught out undertaking corrupt or illegal activities.

The cancer of crony capitalism

The depth and extent of crony capitalism practices have been well documented. It extends from Malaysia's largest corporations down to class F contractors or petty traders, where may citizens are trying to scratch out a living.

Over the last 50 years, the establishment has looked

after its own. Royal households have been given lucrative timber and other business concessions. Politicians have built up business empires and networks of associates benefitting from inside information and favoritism. A small group of connected businesspeople have been given choice monopolies, concessions, restricted business operating licenses, and allowed to takeover public assets and convert them into private assets by reigning prime ministers.

Crony capitalism is starving any sense of equality of business opportunities in the economy. Companies succeed through connections, not vision, superior products and competitiveness. So much of the economy is restricted to a few, market opportunity is certainly not equal for all. Even existing successful businesses are being forced to devest to Bumiputera equity holders, as was seen with the freight forwarding regulations, requiring companies with operating licenses to have 51 percent Bumiputera equity.

This has resulted in the Malay establishment becoming a class of rent-seekers, taking little, if any risk in their business undertakings. Some of those who fail have been bailed out. Not all Malays are equal. Many Malays themselves distinguish Bumiputeras from UMNO-putras, who are given unfair privileg-

es. The 12th Malaysia Plan has been framed in such a way that it will benefit the connected, rather than equally among Bumiputeras, and other Malaysians. Malay businesses without connections are most likely to get little, if any assistance.

The ability of the Malay establishment to restrict economic opportunity has assisted in creating a patriarchal society based upon reward and punishment. Malaysia has slipped from the 3rd to the 6th largest economy within ASEAN since 2015.

Tearing down secularism

Although Malaysia has a primarily secular constitution, Article 3 states that Islam is the religion of the federation, but other religious may be practiced in peace and harmony. The supreme governing body of Malaysia is the parliament, which is made up of the Yang Di-Petuan Agong or king, the Dewan Rakyat or lower house, and the Senate or upper house. With the government coming from the lower house by popular vote, government is inferred to be of a secular nature.

The Rukun Negara or national principles is the declaration of a formal national philosophy, proclaimed on Merdeka Day in 1970. The five Rukun

Negara principles are belief in God, loyalty to king and country, supremacy of the constitution, sovereignty of the law, and courtesy and morality.

However, Malaysia has been heading down an Islamization path since the 1970s. Nowhere has this been more apparent than in the education system. Education has been one of the major contributing factors in creating an Islamic identity within Malays. Over three generation this has led to a greater division of the community, which was up until the 1970s, an inclusive multi-cultural one. The former prime minister Mahathir Mohamed and his then deputy Anwar Ibrahim Islamized the civil service during the 1990s. Syariah laws have been strengthened and the Malaysia Islamic Development Department or JAKIM was formed in 1997 under the Prime Ministers Office to centralise bureaucratic control over Islamic affairs. The freedom of non-Muslims to express their respective faiths has been whittled away over the last two decades.

During the 1990s when UMNOs electoral nemesis was the Parti Islam Se-Malaysia or PAS, Mahathir declared that Malaysia was an Islamic state. Within the public sector, military, higher education, and across Malay led state governments, most employ-

ment positions exclude non-Malays. Even other Bumiputeras were at a disadvantage in career upward mobility, unless they were Muslims themselves. The community gulf between Muslims and non-Muslims is wider than ever. Malays themselves are under strong pressure to conform and be compliant to the exclusionist culture that has been developing over the last two decades.

The dismantling of secularism has enhanced the power of the Malay elite. The authority of the establishment is almost unquestioned today openly. Its not impossible to question the role of Islam in government and society. There is now little separation between Islam and government, with a state defined Islam forced upon the citizenry. Islam in Malaysia is not a spiritual undertaking, but a matter of compulsory adherence.

The great divide

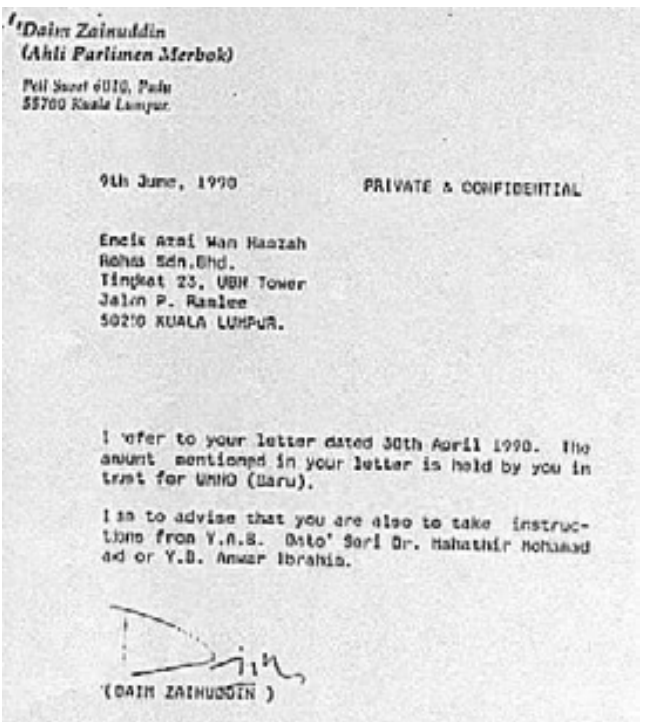
The tangibles from the Malay establishment hijacking Malaysian politics, economics, and society have been to create a land of the privileged. The product of this is the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting relatively poorer. Islam and racial politics have just hidden the real divide, that being of class.

The Malay-centric political parties have been fighting for the spoils of office, while the country is facing health and economic crises. People are becoming destitute, even those who see themselves as middle-class. Many are struggling to even find enough food to eat, while the government through the 12th Malaysian Plan is planning to pump even more money into a bloated bureaucracy, and crony businesses. The 2022 budget has been il-designed to deal with rampant inflation and rising unemployment.

Privilege is the nation's number one enemy. This is the source of corruption, crony capitalism, abuses of power, and denying equal economic opportunity to all in Malaysia. This is the cause of an unprecedented rise in poverty. None of the new political movements or those advocating a reset for Malaysia have even identified this as the key problem to solve.

The Malay elite is just a cozy little club

Sometimes they have rifts and we can see the extent of their corruption



Daim Zainuddin
(Ahli Parlimen Merbok)

Peti Surat 6010, Pudu
55700 Kuala Lumpur.

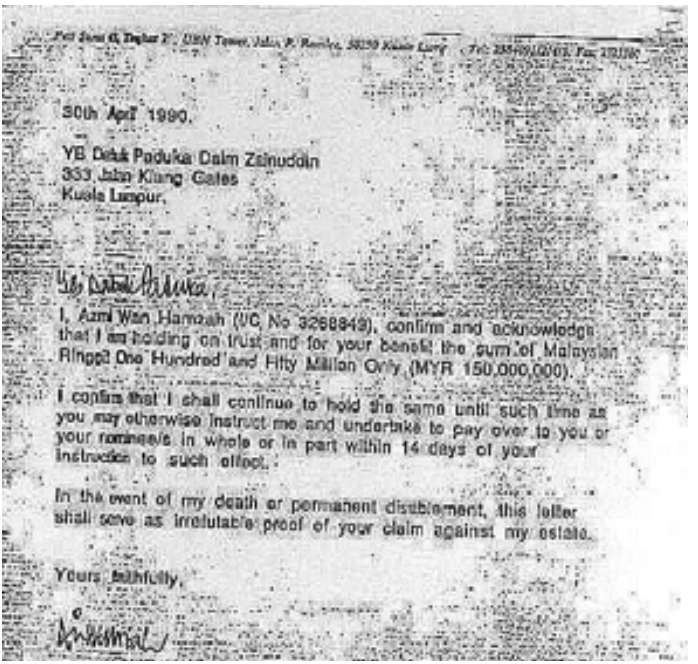
9th June, 1990 PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

Encik Azmi Wan Hamzah
Rohas Sdn.Bhd.
Tingkat 23, UBN Tower
Jalan P. Ramlee
50250 KUALA LUMPUR.

I refer to your letter dated 30th April 1990. The amount mentioned in your letter is held by you in trust for UMNO (Baru).

I am to advise that you are also to take instructions from Y.A.B. Dato' Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad and or Y.B. Anwar Ibrahim.

(DAIM ZAINUDDIN)



30th April 1990.

YB Datuk Paduka Daim Zainuddin
333 Jalan Kiang Gates
Kuala Lumpur.

YB Datuk Paduka,

I, Azmi Wan Hamzah (I/C No 3268843), confirm and acknowledge that I am holding on trust and for your benefit the sum of Malaysian Ringgit One Hundred and Fifty Million Only (MYR 150,000,000).

I confirm that I shall continue to hold the same until such time as you may otherwise instruct me and undertake to pay over to you or your nominee/s in whole or in part within 14 days of your instruction to such effect.

In the event of my death or permanent disablement, this letter shall serve as irrefutable proof of your claim against my estate.

Yours faithfully,

Daim Zainuddin
(Ahli Parlimen Merbok)

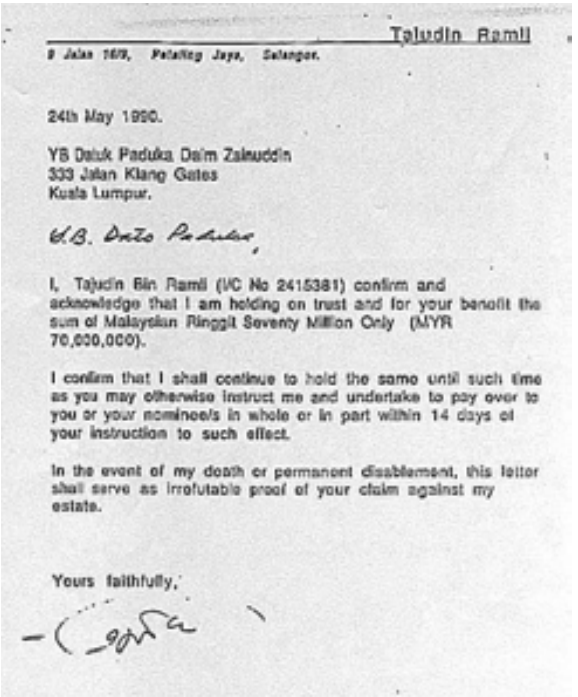
Peti Surat 4010, Pudu
55700 Kuala Lumpur.

9th June, 1990 PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIA

Encik Tajuddin Rasli
9 Jalan 16/9
Petaling Jaya
SELANGOR.

I refer to your letter dated 24th May 1990. amount mentioned in your letter is held by you trust for UMNO (Baru).

I am to advise that you are also to take instr tions from Y.A.B. Dato' Seri Dr. Mahathir Moha and or Y.B. Anwar Ibrahim.



Tajudin Ramli

9 Jalan 16/9, Petaling Jaya, Selangor.

24th May 1990.

YB Datuk Paduka Daim Zainuddin
333 Jalan Klang Gates
Kuala Lumpur.

Y.B. Dato Paduka,

I, Tajudin Bin Ramli (I/C No 2415381) confirm and acknowledge that I am holding on trust and for your benefit the sum of Malaysian Ringgit Seventy Million Only (MYR 70,000,000).

I confirm that I shall continue to hold the same until such time as you may otherwise instruct me and undertake to pay over to you or your nominee/s in whole or in part within 14 days of your instruction to such effect.

In the event of my death or permanent disablement, this letter shall serve as irrefutable proof of your claim against my estate.

Yours faithfully,

LAPORAN POLIS DATO' SERI ANWAR IBRAHIM TERHADAP RASUAH TUN DAIM ZAINUDDIN PADA 30 JUL 99

\LAPORAN POLIS TUN HS LEE 20455/99

Pada 14 April 1999 , tatkala memberikan kenyataan di mahkamah , saya telah merujuk kepada beberapa perlakuan rasuah besar oleh pemimpin-pemimpin

negara. Saya juga telah merujuk kepada surat-surat dari tiga tokoh korporat ditujukan kepada Tun Daim Zainuddin , ketika itu Menteri Kewangan, yang membuktikan dengan jelas bahawa beliau menerima wang tunai dan saham berjumlah ratusan juta ringgit. Perdana Menteri Dato Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohammad bukan sekadar menghalang tindakan, bahkan terus melindungi rasuah besar yang dilakukan oleh Tun Daim sejak beliau menjadi Menteri Kewangan buat pertama kalinya dahulu.Malahan, sehingga kini, saya di fahamkan tidak ada siasatan oleh pihak polis atau Badan Pencegah Rasuah dilakukan. Dengan ini, saya sertakan dokumen sah bagi membuktikan rasuah, iaitu tiga pucuk surat yang masing-masing di tulis oleh Tan Sri Halim Saad, Tan Sri Tajuddin Ramli dan Tan Sri Wan Azmi Hamzah. Tan Sri Halim, dalam surat bertarikh 30 April 1990, menyatakan beliau memegang sebagai pemegang amanah sebanyak 52,208,500 saham Faber Merlin Bhd (saham 1.00) dan 130,000,000 saham Renong Berhad (50 sen) bagi pihak Tun Daim. Beliau mengesahkan bahawa nilai saham itu di pegang menurut arahan Tun Daim atau penama beliau. Tan Sri Tajuddin pula, dalam surat kepada Tun Daim bertarikh 24 Mei 1990 mengesahkan bahawa beliau memegang secara amanah bagi pihak Tun Daim wang sejumlah RM 70 juta. Tan Sri Wan Azmi pula, dalam surat kepada Tun Daim ber-

tarikh 30 April 1990 mengaku memegang bagi pihak Tun Daim wang sejumlah RM 150 juta. Ini tentunya sebahagian kecil dari perolehan Tun Daim yang juga bertindak bagi pihak Dato Seri Dr. Mahathir. Saya menerima maklumat bahawa sebahagian besar wang tersebut adalah hasil pengagihan saham Resorts World, syarikat perjudian yang disenaraikan atas kelulusan Tun Daim sejurus sebelum meninggalkan Kementerian Kewangan pada tahun 1991 dahulu. Dengan kaedah sedemikian beliau telah menggunakan kedudukannya dalam kerajaan bagi mengambil manfaat bagi dirinya. Bagaimana pula dengan puluhan syarikat lainnya? Saya yakin bahawa dengan cara sedemikian, Tun Daim dengan restu Dato Seri Dr. Mahathir telah berjaya mengumpulkan berbillion ringgit. Saya juga telah mendapat maklumat bahawa syarikat Hati Budi yang dahulunya dikatakan dikuasai oleh UMNO telah diluputkan kepentingan oleh dua orang penama, iaitu Tan Sri Halim Saad dan Dato' Anuar Othman. Adalah difahamkan 400 juta saham yang dipegang oleh Dato' Anuar Othman yang disebut sebagai amanah untuk UMNO telah diarah oleh Tun Daim supaya dipindah kepada syarikat United Engineers dan Tan Sri Halim. Apabila saya laporkan masalah tersebut kepada Dato Seri Dr. Mahathir dalam tahun 1996, beliau menyatakan bahawa Tun Daim yang akan menguruskannya, dan mengar-

ahkan saya supaya jangan mencampuri hal tersebut. Hanya setelah saya mendedahkan maklumat tersebut, maka Tun Daim segera berdalih menyatakan dalam Perhimpunan Agong UMNO 1999 baru-baru ini bahawa wang dan saham dari tiga ahli korporat itu adalah untuk UMNO. Nyatalah, bila nampak tersepit, barulah di sebut harta yang dikumpulkan itu hak Parti UMNO. Setahu saya, berdasarkan bukti surat, dan dari akaun dan maklumat Majlis Tertinggi atau Perhimpunan Agong UMNO, tidak pernah timbul sama sekali kepentingan Parti. Keduanya, selaku Menteri Kewangan menerima sumbangan peribadi beratus-ratus juta ringgit adalah rasuah besar dan pecah amanah jenayah. Sekiranya beliau sekarang mendakwa bahawa wang tersebut adalah hak Parti, beliau tetap bersalah kerana tidak pernah memberi laporan kepada Parti tentang wang tersebut. Hanya apabila saya mendedahkan mengenainya, baru beliau menyebutnya dalam Perhimpunan Agong yang lalu.

Anwar Ibrahim 12.28 t/hari (30 Julai 1999)

Translated from Malay:

DATO' SERI ANWAR IBRAHIM'S POLICE REPORT AGAINST TUN DAIM ZAINUDDIN'S CORRUPTION ON 30 JUL 99

POLICE REPORT TUN HS LEE 20455/99

On April 14, 1999, when giving a statement in court, I have referred to several acts of corruption by the country's leaders. I have also referred to letters from three corporate figures addressed to Tun Daim Zainuddin, then Minister of Finance, which clearly proves that he received hundreds of millions of ringgit in cash and shares. Prime Minister Dato Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohammad did not just prevent actions, he even continued to protect the massive corruption committed by Tun Daim since he became Minister of Finance for the first time. In fact, until now, I understand that there has been no investigation by the police or the Anti-Corruption Agency. Herewith, I enclose legal documents to prove corruption, namely three letters written by Tan Sri Halim Saad, Tan Sri Tajuddin Ramli and Tan Sri Wan Azmi Hamzah. Tan Sri Halim, in a letter dated 30 April 1990, stated that he held as a trustee 52,208,500 Faber Merlin Bhd shares (1.00 shares) and 130,000,000 Renong Berhad shares (50 sen) on behalf of Tun Daim. He confirmed that the value of the shares was held according to the instructions of Tun Daim or his nominee. Tan Sri Tajuddin, in a letter to Tun Daim dated 24 May 1990, confirmed that he held in trust on behalf of Tun Daim a sum of RM 70 million. Tan Sri Wan Azmi,

in a letter to Tun Daim dated 30 April 1990, admitted holding RM 150 million on behalf of Tun Daim. This is of course a small part of Tun Daim's earnings who also act on behalf of Dato Seri Dr. Mahathir. I received information that most of the money was the result of the distribution of shares of Resorts World, a gambling company that was listed with the approval of Tun Daim shortly before leaving the Ministry of Finance in 1991. With such a method he has used his position in the government to benefit himself. What about dozens of other companies? I am sure that in such a way, Tun Daim with the blessing of Dato Seri Dr. Mahathir has managed to collect billions of ringgit. I have also received information that the Hati Budi company which was previously said to be controlled by UMNO has been divested of its interests by two nominees, namely Tan Sri Halim Saad and Dato' Anuar Othman. It is understood that the 400 million shares held by Dato' Anuar Othman, which is said to be a trust for UMNO, was ordered by Tun Daim to be transferred to United Engineers and Tan Sri Halim. When I reported the problem to Dato Seri Dr. Mahathir in 1996, he stated that Tun Daim would manage it, and instructed me not to interfere in the matter. Only after I disclosed the information, then Tun Daim immediately excused himself stating in the recent 1999 UMNO General Assembly that the

money and shares from the three corporate members were for UMNO. The truth is, when it seems to be stuck, then it is said that the property collected is the right of the UMNO Party. As far as I know, based on the evidence of the letter, and from the accounts and information of the Supreme Council or the UMNO General Assembly, no interest of the Party has ever arisen at all. Both, as the Minister of Finance receiving personal donations of hundreds of millions of ringgit is a major corruption and criminal breach of trust. If he now claims that the money is the right of the Party, he is still guilty of never giving a report to the Party about the money. It was only when I revealed about it that he mentioned it in the last Agong Assembly.

Anwar Ibrahim 12.28 t/day (30 July 1999)

How Ketuanan Melayu became an ideology of greed

Challenges to its legitimacy

Malaysia, as a federation is based upon nine Malay Sultanates in the peninsula, with two of the old Straits Settlements, Penang and Melaka, along with Sabah and Sarawak. The royal families had a major say in the construction of the constitution, creating a modified Westminster democracy with some special powers given to the Sultans, via a five year rotational position of supreme monarch among the sultans, known as the Yang Di-Pertuan Agong. The civilian political leaders, then led by Tunku Abdul Rahman ran a multi-cultural democratic coalition after Malaya gained independence in 1957.

After the race riots in May 1969, a group of Malay-centric Young Turks in the dominant Malay-based coalition party UMNO, created a political crisis where Tunku Abdul Rahman was forced to resign in 1970, and replaced with Tun Abdul Razak Hussein. This new administration oversaw the enactment of a racially affirmative economic policy aimed to create positive discrimination towards the nation's Bumiputera's, or defined indigenous peoples under the constitution. Along with this New Economic Policy (NEP), a less talked about National Cultural Policy or Dasar Kebangsaan Nasional was also introduced. This policy had the objective of developing a dominant national identity.

The aim of the governing establishment was to make Malay culture the national culture. Thus, the persona of the dominant national identity was articulated as Malayness within a vista of Islam, thus marginalizing non-Muslim Bumiputeras. Cultural norms, practices, artefacts, and the character of the state were ethnized.

Malayness then began to erode multiculturalism. In parallel, Malaysia's economic development efforts were skewed towards positive discrimination towards Malays, that excluded both non-Malays and

other non-Muslim Bumiputeras. The myth of Ketuanan Melayu or Malay supremacy was created as a political tool by the dominant ruling party at the time, UMNO to keep power in the hands of the Malay establishment, which they saw themselves as representing. This was based upon premises constructed from a flawed view of history by a group of UMNO stalwarts, who published a manifesto in 1971 called Revolusi Mental.

Revolusi Mental portrayed Malays as weak and backward. The narrative claimed Malays were exploited by other ethnic communities, their colonial masters, and the capitalist system. The authors of Revolusi Mental claimed that Malay fatalism allowed acceptance of these injustices, as Malays lacked the courage to fight back.

Revolusi Mental ran down the Malay character, describing the Malay psych as being based on sentiment and emotion, rather than rationality. Malays made little effort to acquire wealth, and lacked the trait of frugalness, not thinking of the future. There was little interest in science and technology. Malays were described as being subjected to poverty of the soul, lacking originality of thought, imagination, and any sense of inquiry.

Ketuanan Melayu unlike other nationalist ideologies wasn't based on ethnic pride. It was based upon degrading Malay culture, heritage, and history, by pointing out ethnic faults. Ketuanan Melayu promoted a culture of dependence where a ruling elite would protect the Malays from projected enemies that were out to destroy them and their religion Islam.

Ketuanan Melayu became a pessimistic political ideology of a conservative Malay establishment, which kept the Malay citizenry trapped in dependence and eternal gratitude. Ketuanan Melayu was primarily concerned about keeping the Malay establishment in power and protecting their own.

Syed Hussein Alatas in his book, The Myth of the Lazy Malay postulated that this ideology is ignorant and colonizing, with many historical facts and assumptions about Malay culture and psych deeply flawed. Ketuanan Melayu was just the legitimization of Malay hegemony and the right of the Malay establishment to monopolize all forms of wealth and capital. Through the NEP a neo-feudal social hierarchy has been created, with political patronage being the cement to maintain power, authority, and maintain a culture of dependence.

This massive 50 year social engineering project has

created a divided society with two sets of laws, one for the Malay establishment and another for the rest. The civil service has become the custodian of the Malay agenda, and created a class of bureaucrat capitalists. This has become embedded within the psych of Malays through three generations of education and indoctrination. A sense of both entitlement and dependence has been developed through the liberal use of credit to the Malays to create a massive middle-class debt trap to silence dissent.

The reality of Ketuanan Melayu is that it has contributed to greater inequities among the Malays, marginalized all other ethnic groups, and led to intra-Malay feuding and political competition to gain the spoils of power, where the winning group takes all.

Today, Malays live in fear of voicing dissenting opinions or criticizing the establishment within the cultural, political, social, economic, and religious domains. Non-agreeance with the Malay establishment is projected as an attack on mythical Malay unity. Imagined enemies are projected into society to create a sense of unity, dependence, and hate for anyone different. This keeps the focus away from tyranny, oppression, and exploitation by the Malay establish-

ment. Ketuanan Melayu is an ideology promoting the domination of a small elite upon their own, and other communities that make up what was once a multi-cultural Malaysia.

Challenges to the Ketuanan Melayu ideology

Although Ketuanan Melayu is institutionally deep rooted and dominates Malaysian society, the ideology is not without challenges.

In the recent Melaka state election, Pakatan Harapan was decimated, winning only 5 seats. This was a loss of 10 seats from the 2018 election. However, Pakatan received 35.8 percent of the popular vote against the Barisan Nasional which garnered 38.39 percent in three cornered contests with Perikatan Nasional. This is a difference of only 8,284 votes. In the 2018 state election Pakatan won 51.1 percent of the popular vote.

In the 2018 national general election, Pakatan with its ally Warisan from Sabah, obtained 49.5 percent of the popular vote. If the votes of Barisan Nasional and PAS were added together, the Malay forces aggregated 50.5 percent of the popular vote. Going back to the 2008 general election, Pakatan received 47.43 percent to BN's 51.39 percent. Then in 2013 Pakatan

received 50.87 percent to BN's 47.38 percent of the popular vote.

While allowing for some of the minor parties switching allegiances over the years, popular voting figures indicate a strongly polarized electorate. If one reads ideology into these figures, then roughly half of the country prefers a multi-cultural Malaysia to what exists today.

Based on the popular vote, the future of the Ketuanan Melayu ideology hinges upon the ballot box.

For many Malaysians the unexpected election win of Pakatan in the 2018 general election led to celebration. Many hoped that the win was the opportunity for Malaysia to go through a rebirth – a second Merdeka. There was hope that in this new Malaysia there would no longer be second class citizens and the country would undergo massive economic, political, and social reforms.

However, nothing could have been further from the truth. With one of the former architects of Ketuanan Melayu, Mahathir Mohamed as prime minister, a self-declared "Malay first" Muhyiddin Yassin as minister of home affairs, and a Salafi-leaning education minister, Maszlee Malik further Islamizing the

nation's education system, reform was doomed. Even the then so-called prime minister in waiting Anwar Ibrahim had drifted away from the old spirit of the Reformasi days.

Pakatan was the hope of many to end the tyranny of Ketuanan Melayu. The poor performance of Pakatan in the recent Melaka state election casts grave doubts about whether Pakatan is up to the job of winning government in the next general election, which may be held as early as next year. Some have spiritually abandoned Pakatan, prepared to vote for the Perikatan alternative, as the Melaka state election indicated, or aspire to support a new political movement led by a younger generation, like Syed Saddiq's MUDA movement.

Has the Malay establishment created their own Nemesis?

Another threat to Ketuanan Melayu ideology is radical Islam. The Islamic State objective to create an Islamic Caliphate led by a theocracy appeals to some Malays. According to a 2015 Pew Research Centre Global Attitudes study, 12 percent of Muslim Malaysians hold favourable views of ISIS.

There have been many reports of Malaysians fight-

ing alongside ISIS militants in Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, and Syria. Malaysia has not been immune from ISIS attacks, with the Movida Restaurant and Bar bombing at Puchong, Selangor in 2016.

With a youth unemployment rate of 12 percent and unemployed graduates running at 22.5 percent, the environment to recruit activists is fertile. Malay society is not living up to the expectations that state promoted Islam has created. The authoritarian, feudalistic, corrupt, gangsterism, and establishment's hypocrisy towards Islam has disenchanted a section of Malay youth, who have been grounded in Islam and are looking for other alternatives.

ISIS messages through social media are powerful. They show starving children as victims of war, and the results of US drone strikes, which are designed to create outrage and anger with impressionable young people. The Taliban retaking of Kabul in August is seen as an inspiring event. Last year an e-hailing driver Mohamed Ayub Musa was sentenced to three years prison for possessing videos related to ISIS.

Islam in Malaysia no longer carries the moderation and tolerance it once had. The tweet by the PAS information director congratulating the Taliban on retacking Kabul, and the government's support for

Hamas, rather than the Palestinian government is virtue signalling to the youth tacit approval of jihad methodology. To many Malays, supporting the Taliban and Hamas is no different to supporting ISIS.

The promotion of stricter interpretations of Islam is not helping. The push towards Arabism and the Salafi doctrines behind this has been putting Malays into an identity crisis. Should they emulate a Malay or Muslim identity? Ketuanan Melayu has encouraged Malays to exclude other non-Muslim communities, where they have been portrayed as enemies of Islam. Democracy and party politics is seen as a way, certain groups carrying an agenda to destroy the Islamic society in Malaysia.

ISIS has both the utopian appeal to Muslims and a deranged Jihadist appeal to those who want to achieve martyrdom in a Holy war. It is radical and revolutionary wanting to rid the Islamic world of tyrants who don't strictly follow Islam. This creates a fertile recruiting ground. ISIS messaging is extremely powerful for the vulnerable.

The Special Branch has allocated massive resources to detect and conduct surveillance on these groups. Domestic terrorism is now perhaps the major concern of the Special Branch, as in the long term it directly threatens the authority of the monarchy.

The Ketuanan Melayu ideology influences everything in Malaysia. It defines position in society, has dispensed away with the concept of meritocracy in government, education, and the armed forces. It has defined the nature of the Malaysian economy, a highly regulated market-scape, with rules that favour the privileged. It has defined the Malay identity, creating a powerful elite, a trapped middle-class, and a disposed poor.

Ketuanan Melayu is under threat, but stanchly protected by vested interests. An election win by a coalition committed to multi-culturalism will have to negotiate and navigate through the ideology rather than dispense with it. However, looking at Pakatan's electoral performance, the electoral landscape is more likely to be dominated by the Malay-centric parties in the future.

Radical Islam is a long-term threat. This is why the Special Branch takes the infiltration and influence of ISIS very seriously. ISIS operatives have on a few occasions been detected within the armed forces. Social media and Islamic organizations are all on the watchlist. However, it's the materialism Ketuanan Melayu has created within the debt ridden middle-class that will act as the best buffer against radical

Islam. In the future the biggest threat to Ketuanan Melayu may not be multi-culturalism, but the ideology of an Islamic Caliphate.

Originally published in the Eurasia Review 4th December 2021

Anwar's Ketuanan Melayu

Not all Malays are equal

Ketuanan Melayu or Malay supremacy has been an unwritten component of government policy for the last 50 years. Many had hoped that Ketuanan Melayu would be pronounced 'dead and buried', when Anwar Ibrahim became prime minister.

Anwar's cry over the years was Ketuanan Malaysian.

However, his launching of Malaysia Madani indicated otherwise. The semantics of Madani sounded good – sustainability, prosperity, innovation, respect, trust, and compassion – but the actions have resembled a continuance of Ketaunan Melayu, hidden behind the Madani branding.

With the reintroduction of the 1970s vintage 3Rs (Race, Royalty, and Religion), any effective discussion about Ketuanan Melayu has been suppressed. Mainstream portals are now reluctant to carry OpEds on the subject, and any blogger who does could be blocked by the MCMC.

Twelve months down the track, non-Malays are experiencing a sense of disenfranchisement they haven't felt for years. This was symbolised by Anwar's answer to a student who asked him about the quota system in education. The prime minister personally made her feel she had encroached upon taboo, citing the long forgotten 'social contract', another term from the seventies.

Enhancing Malay-centric government

Anwar has reaffirmed the 1.7 million people civil service doesn't need any reform, even when it is bloated and inefficient. There are no moves to widen the ethnic diversity of the civil service inline with ethnic demographics that exist in Malaysia today.

RM 1.9 billion has been allocated to the Islamic Development Department of Malaysia (JAKIM) and its responsibilities widened to include responsibilities for policing censorship on the web, and playing a role in economic planning.

This has ensured a 'Malay-centric' mindset is further embedded into the civil service and government.

Apathy towards non-Malays

Over the year, one thing that is clearly visible is an apparent apathy towards non-Malays in the country. This has been clearly seen in the low representation of the Indian community in the cabinet, where the DAP is also under-represented according to the party's numbers in parliament.

Anthony Loke's caution over the Palestine Solidarity Week, and the Sarawak government stating Sarawak won't be participating, indicate that major members of the unity coalition aren't being consulted on major decisions.

While the non-Malays have been thrown to the sidelines, Malays themselves have been abused, when they get in the way of corporate cronies. The current Kampong Sungei Baru residents, and Kanthan farmer evictions are being undertaken just to enrich cronies and GLCs. The rights of the voiceless Malays must give way to corporations. Any sense of fairness and justice has been thrown to the wind.

When the New Economic Policy (NEP) originated

back in 1971, the objective was to redistribute equity towards the Malays. It was not the mums and pops but corporate cronies that benefitted.

The optics are not good

Now the Madani objective is to transfer as much state land as possible to crony corporations and GLCs. This has been quasi-clandestine, where any critic or whistle-blower has been pursued through the civil law codes to silence them.

The directive to government ministries and departments not to entertain any correspondence not written in Bahasa Malaysia turns the administration even more towards a Malay-centric outlook.

The DNAA of deputy prime minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi on charges of curruption, and prosecution of Muhyiddin Yassin gives the appearance of a judicial system that is being used to protect the Malay polity in power and persecute those in political opposition.

The introduction of the 40 Hadiths into the school curriculum gives the impression the education system is continuing to be Islamized by the government. Some of these decisions are cutting into government

unity, as the Sarawak State Government is not adopting some of these directives.

Thus, after almost a year, its certain the Anwar administration has continued along the Ketuanan Melayu stance, abet in a more subdued manner, without the hard rhetoric. This has come at the cost of reform.

However, the beneficiaries are not the general Malay population, but an elite class within the Malay polity and their associates. This time, any criticisms of this unwritten policy is silenced in one way or another.

Originally published in My Sin Chew 6th November 2023

Malaysia's political theatre: it's all about power

The Malay elite pretend to be the guardians of the Malays, with fictional enemies to create fear and keep them in power.

There is one thing in common with the "Sheraton Putsch" that removed Pakatan Harapan from power, the substitution of Muhyiddin Yassin with Ismail Sabri Yaakob as prime minister and the dissolution of the state assemblies of Sabah, Melaka, and now, Johor.

These events were solely about who should rule. They were not about any fundamental disagreements over policy. They were tactical lunges for power.

The Malaysian political arena is structured in such a way that encourages power plays. Government and politics in Malaysia require various parties to collaborate on mutual objectives, yet compete with each other at the same time. Alliances are made and broken on a regular basis on both sides of politics.

The Malay political environment is influenced by history, a resulting culture that resonates a disposition towards power fixation, a behaviour consistent with these beliefs, and corresponding outcomes based upon power dynamics.

The Machiavellian frame is a good paradigm or window to view the antics and manoeuvring within Malaysian politics. The window enables us to interpret the rhetoric, actions, and outcomes as acts designed to achieve, maintain, and fend off others from power.

The publicity orientated mass political party defections common before elections shows the acting and theatre involved in Malaysian politics. The Ketuanan Melayu or Malay supremacy narrative shows Malaysia's dark and narcissistic Machiavellian expression.

Niccolo Machiavelli was born in Florence, Italy in 1469. He entered the Florentine government as a secretary and rose dramatically until he was in charge of diplomatic missions.

Machiavelli was himself dismissed from office with a political change and began writing books about government, leadership and power. Machiavelli's views completely lack sentimentality, were amoral, and took a pragmatic line about being effective in achieving outcomes. He viewed political skills as the most important talent a leader should have.

The Machiavellian frame is a political paradigm that sees leadership and governance within a political arena, where overt and covert agendas, tactics and treachery make theatre.

Leaders who think 'We are the law'

These concepts and ideas were utilised by former Umno politician and deputy minister Afifuddin Omar who wrote a novel about the intrigue of Malaysian politics called Paradoks.

Afifuddin through his novel exposed the hidden hypocrisy of upright Malay politicians who preached Islamic values only to engage in extra-marital sex, corruption and abuse of power.

In Paradoks, the ruling political party became so powerful it became arrogant, with leaders believing they were above the law. "We are the law" is a common catch-cry within Umno. Leaders surrounded by a corrupt environment have no way to go but to become morally corrupt themselves.

This is a theme that Shahnon Ahmad in his novel SHIT expanded upon. The ruling class uses all of its political apparatus to rule at the expense of moral and religious values. In this light, the formation of Jakim wasn't about Islam, but was an effort of Dr Mahathir Mohamad to check the powers of the royal households.

Afifuddin espoused that it is the goal of every elected Malay parliamentarian to serve in the Cabinet. As a consequence, a politician's public persona is very different from their private aspirations. Politicians are masters of switching their personas at any time.

Mahathir's many faces

It's not difficult to find examples of this. Mahathir was a master of changing his narratives according to his audiences. Anwar Ibrahim can speak as an Islamist and as a liberal democrat.

Azmin Ali played multiple roles behind the political scene, and has maintained a senior ministerial portfolio across three administrations.

Many ministers and state chief ministers hold massive corrupt portfolios and businesses by proxy, while advocating Islam and ethics of government.

The people can't be sure who their politicians really are and what they stand for. Even the bright young hope of Muda, Syed Saddiq Syed Abdul Rahman, advocating a fair and non-discriminatory society, once flirted with Zakir Naik, who holds extreme views about the rights of non-Muslims in Malaysia.

Machiavellian politics can also be used on a macro level. The ruling elite have continually divided the Malaysian people over race and religion.

Elite 'guardians' who rob the masses

The Malay elite have pretended to be the guardians and defenders of the Malays and robbed them blind through the misappropriation and corruption of public funds. The elite have created fictional enemies to create fear and keep them in power.

Malaysian leaders are masters at acting in the most pious manner, being faithful towards Islam, but be-

hind the scenes intentionally start rumours and disseminate misinformation to destroy the reputations of their political competitors.

Malaysian politicians by nature rarely expose their true intentions. These only become visible when it is the right time to do so.

Mahathir allowed the illusion that he had changed and wanted to right his past wrongs to develop during the 2018 general election campaign when he rode to victory under Pakatan Harapan's reform platform.

It's all about power

Malaysian politics is a power game. The selection of political candidates for public office is a prize for the prime minister to select. This is leading to a dire power struggle within Umno today.

The party president Ahmad Zahid Hamidi has the right to select candidates over prime minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob. This is the source of the struggle with a general election due next year.

Umno's current political upheaval has nothing to do with ideology, just power. Umno is a party full of powerbrokers, warlords, divisional chiefs and families who pledge their loyalties to anyone who will provide them with the most advantages and favours.

Cabinet positions, membership in agency and GLC boards, and commercial contracts are the spoils of war. Winners usually play zero-sum games and everyone knows this.

Consequently, creating regulations, monopoly concessions, and restrictive licensing for cronies is a necessary fact of the current political system. These business spoils also fill election war-chests to ensure they win.

Making sure politics pays

The electors within the Malay heartlands see their politicians as hero Robin Hoods. They steal from the rakyat and give tokens back during election time. Power is a great investment. Spend during an election campaign and win the power to get returns many times back.

Bending and breaking the rules have no ethical consequences to Machiavellian politicians. It's part of their cultural programming. Corruption is partly just a means to an end.

The whole country has slipped into the Machiavellian paradigm. While audiences around the world watch Frank Underwood in the House of Cards ma-

nipulate and cheat his way to the presidency, even committing a murder, Malaysians chat all day in coffee shops and in Whatsapp groups about the latest scandal.

Malay politicians are expected to provide entertainment, so behaving that way fails to shock. Scandals that break are usually quickly forgotten and the politicians get away.

These antics divert public attention away from the real issues of the nation such as inflation, growing poverty, public health, lack of provisions for retirement and poor infrastructure throughout much of the country.

Roots of Malay Machiavellianism

Malay Machiavellianism has deep historical and cultural roots. The Malay Sultanates pre-colonial days were centred around loyalty to the monarch, rather than loyalty to a state that was very vaguely defined geographically.

Subjects had a wa'adat or social contract with the ruler. The people accepted the right of the sultan to rule, and the sultan would protect them. Disobedience to the ruler was considered an act of treason.

Power was the concept of Malay sovereignty, not territories that colonial administrations created during British rule.

The concept of 'kerajaan' or a government of the Sultan is culturally deeply accepted among the Malays. This installed a respectful subservience in the population, publicly unquestionable.

The first prime minister Tunku Abdul Rahman said without protecting the influence of the rulers, the Malays would lose whatever semblance of belonging they might have in the land of their birth.

The political leadership partly hijacked this concept of authority, which installed them as the effective power of the nation. Opportunistic Malay politicians nurtured the narrative of Ketuanan Melayu, or Malay supremacy, to self-legitimise power.

Power that corrupts

Machiavellianism in Malaysia is about preserving the current power structure within society. These Machiavellian leaders don't give any importance to community advancement or what is right for the country. They focus on winning for themselves.

However, there is some hope for Malaysia. Machi-

avelli was never fully understood. He did leave some hope.

Machiavelli was blunt and honest in his appraisal of basic human nature, stripped of moral overtones. Machiavelli's premise was that power is neutral, and good or evil is generated by the way it is used.

However, this is where the problem lies. When one acquires power, it's most likely that one will become corrupt as well.

This is Malaysia's tragedy.

Malaysia Has Fallen: Recent Najib Commutation Highlights Two-Tier System Of Justice

The recent commutation of former prime minister and convicted felon Najib Razak's prison sentence on the last day of Sultan Abdullah's reign as the Malaysian king, has exposed the nation's two-tier system of justice. This has led to widespread criticism by traditional Pakatan Harapan (PH) supporters. The fact that the minister of the federal territories Zaliha Mustafa, a member of prime minister Anwar Ibrahim's Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) sat on the Pardons Board and said the decision was a consensus has led to even more outcry.

The whole affair blatantly highlights the two-tier system of law and justice in Malaysia. There is one set of rules for the ruling elite, and another set of rules for the rest. The Pardons Board in its current secret composition reflects the feudalistic nature of Malaysian society today.

Any criticism of the above is technically sedition (as the government controls the definition), where the minister for communications Fahmi Fadzil has already warned Malaysians the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) will take action against anyone who discusses the commutation of Najib's sentence.

However, this has not prevented peoples' criticism online. There is also deep suspicion that prime minister Anwar Ibrahim had some direct involvement, even though he said any pardon or commutation of prisoner sentences are at the king's sole discretion. Some are saying the commutation of Najib's sentence and lowering his RM210 million fine to just RM 50 million has broken through a tipping point, where the bulk of political commentary is no longer favourable to the Madani government.

The poor are suffering and will suffer more

The economic outlook for 2024 could be much worse than what has been forecast by the experts. Prices are still rising, especially in the food sector. Income is not increasing, and doesn't look like it will in the foreseeable future. New taxes are eating away at family consumption in the lower to middle income groups. On top of this, the Ringgit is reaching new lows, increasing both prices and the debt burden.

The leadership of the Madani government just don't seem to have any empathy for Malaysians. The government is floundering (maybe purposely) in its own bureaucracy and long string of advisors. Monopolies still exist and Government linked corporations (GLCs) still control many strategic sectors in Malaysia's economy. The Malaysian market-space is still overburdened with regulation. These inefficiencies are keeping prices on a rising trajectory.

The GLCs and crony rent-seeking capitalists with elite connections are obtaining billion Ringgit projects, while MSMEs are getting token assistance. This is making the cronies richer, while the MSMEs are still suffering from the Covid MCOs two years ago.

The Madani government is redistributing wealth towards the elite in society.

Anwar is not a leader of the people

Anwar emerged after his sacking as deputy prime minister under Mahathir Mohamed back in 1998, as a symbol of reformasi or reform. He became the symbol of hope that people gravitated around. His time in prison increased this 'halo effect'. For 25 years there was a hope a new multicultural Malaysia would be reborn.

Upon becoming prime minister in 2022, the reformasi aura has quickly become tainted with the appointment of UMNO leader Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, who himself was facing 47 charges of corruption and money laundering as deputy prime minister. These charges were dropped by the public prosecutor in 2023, amounting to a discharge without acquittal (DNAA).

This turned any hopes of reform into wishful thinking. Reformasi became mocked and called reformati (the death of reform). Anwar quickly turned from being a leader of the Rakyat (people) to become a puppet of the political and economically powerful elites. He has very much done their bidding by extending monopolies and concessions, awarding contracts outside of tender to politically connected firms.

The hopes of people have been dashed, where now there is a feeling of hopelessness. There is now much talk of people trying to leave Malaysia for better prospects somewhere else. The brain drain is accelerating

Instead of using his leadership to enhance and develop Malaysia's path to democracy, Anwar is steering Malaysia back towards Mahathir's dark ages, where censorship, cronyism, favouritism under the justice system to the very symbol of kleptocracy, while heavily clamping down on criticism and free speech. The so-called '3Rs' (race, religion and royalty) are now taboo in the Malaysian media.

Malaysia is now a country where opponents are persecuted by the nations legal system, which is politically controlled. The internet is illegally blocked, and the media is fearful of criticising the government.

Worst of all, Malaysia's economic policies favour the elites. There is no wealth tax, where a new range of taxes have burdened the poor.

The Malay culture used to create class apartheid

Many Malays said when Anwar was appointed prime minister after the hung parliament following the 2022 general election, that Anwar's government

was one made with Royal prerogative. Consequently, the government should not be criticized, as this would be disrespectful to the king.

Anwar was the choice of the Malay rulers, and Anwar very skilfully through cybertroopers, used the rulers as a cover from criticism. Anwar also had a heavy price to pay for his position, in meeting requests from the rulers. Anwar is governing for the elites rather than the people.

The prosecutions of Malay politicians, are really persecutions of those who have fallen out of favour with the inner circle. To the public, it looks like Anwar is fighting corruption. To the elite, it is about settling old scores. Such is the Machiavellian nature of Malay politics.

Meanwhile, corruption continues unimpeded by the elites, with the big deals being done above any scrutiny and transparency. There will never be any investigations or prosecutions. Whistle blowers suffer very badly. Only the 'small fry' are being caught and prosecuted for public consumption.

Malaysia's feudalism stems back to the British Colonial times, where the sultans were propped up as a symbol of authority the Malays would be obedient

to. This has remained the same until today, as written into the Constitution, where the monarchy is actually the cornerstone.

The politicians under the monarchy have used censorship, repression, the creation of racial divides, and institutionalised Islam to create an obedient Malay peasantry.

Only a few Malays are groomed to become part of the clan of the elite. It takes connections with 'god-fathers' who nurture these young entrants into the professional, civil service, business, and political spheres.

The rest are just thrown crumbs.

Feudalism in Malaysia today

Murray Hunter

Ovi eBook Publishing: February 2024

Ovi magazine
Design: Thanos

An Ovi eBooks Publication
© 2024 Ovi eBookPublications - All material is copyright of the Ovi eBooks Publications & the writer

Ovi eBooks are available in Ovi/Ovi eBookshelves pages and they are for free.
If somebody tries to sell you an Ovi book please contact us immediately.

For details, contact: ovimagazine@yahoo.com

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in or introduced
into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form, or by any means
(electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise),
without the prior permission of the writer or the above publisher of this book

MURRAY HUNTER

FEUDALISM IN Malaysia TODAY

THE REAL ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM IS THE ELITE

Murray has been around the traps of entrepreneurship for too long. He is a long time expat from Australia who has made Malaysia his home and tried his hand at everything from agriculture to computers, to food, to spas and to cosmetics.

Now he is taking the easy life as an associate professor at University Malaysia Perlis. Murray spends half his time in Thailand and the other half looking for opportunities in Malaysia. Murray is passionate and deadly earnest about entrepreneurship and believes everybody should have the chance to "have a go".

Murray's columns focus on giving some simple and practical ideas about the game of entrepreneurship and personal development based on his immense experience and the insights. His pleasure is your success.

More books from Murray Hunter